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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ADOLESCENT PROBLEM READER'S PERCEPTION OF READING

by

(C)

MARTHA WILMA KINLEY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE ADOLESCENT PROBLEM READER'S PERCEPTION OF READING submitted by MARTHA WILMA KINLEY in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading by examining the reading strategies and definitions they employed or held. The student sample consisted of sixteen students, ages 15 to 19 years, from a trades and services program in a senior high school all of whom were problem readers, reading two levels or more below grade placement. The reading level was identified by the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, and the intelligence range was determined by the Wechler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised. A qualitative analysis of the interview data indicated that adolescent problem readers reported strategies for reading in accordance with the task at hand, whether reading for comprehension, recalling text, solving a reading problem, or teaching reading. Subjects held one or more definitions of reading, and tended to focus more on decoding than on comprehension, and on oral rather than silent reading.

Subjects showed an awareness of a variety of functions of reading: for school, vocational, or for private pleasure. They valued vocational reading above other reading, viewed reading as a school activity, and few engaged in reading for pleasure. Although subjects were uncertain of their role as processors of print, and had not developed independence in reading, most thought they were successful.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

> If children are to become capable of realizing their potential in later life, they must acquire the basic tools that a twentieth century society demands. [and] ... If a child leaves school unable to read or inhibited from reading because of continuous difficulties, he suffers a communication handicap which will sharply affect his choice of career, his earning capacity, and his role as a member of a society whose daily bread is the printed word (Cox, 1968, p.41).

In 1955 Rudolf Flesch with Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It drew international attention to reading deficiencies. The ability to read is essential for all who live in our increasingly technological society; written material continually surrounds us, and a person who cannot read is seriously handicapped. Reading disabilities impose innumerable social and economic consequences upon the individual and society, often affecting the personal adjustment and accomplishments of a person; many become drop-outs, juvenile delinquents, prison inmates or welfare recipients (Cox, 1968; Haring & Bateman, 1977; Pollack & Piekarz, 1963).

It has been reported that in the United States of America, one in every seven individuals has reading difficulties requiring special attention at some time in their lives (Richek, List & Lerner, 1983).

Closer at home, a recent news letter from the Northern Alberta Reading Specialists' Council, September 1986, (p.4), reported that one in five Albertans have less than nine years education, a minimum requirement for most employment or for job-training programs. Reading skills are needed throughout life. With the rapidity of change in today's world, old jobs are becoming obsolete, thus, there is a need for continual retraining. Years of reading failure compound and build up a feeling of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with school.

Locally, in 1964, numerous young adolescents were dropping out of school with poor academic skills; i.e., failing grade IX departmental exams, and having no vocational training or skills for employment. W. P. Wagner, Superintendent, in his Annual Report to the Edmonton Public School Board, January 30, 1964 described these young people as:

> Students who will not complete grade IX, who are of senior high school age, some do not pass out of grade VIII while others do not pass out of grade VII. This group, which very well could be 5% of our junior high school enrolments, is now being cared for in part through pre-employment classes (p.5).

Wagner, alarmed at the growing number of failures and dropouts, was instrumental in having special programs and schools established to educate and to prepare these young people for their place in society. Consequently, in 1968 the Edmonton Public School Board established a vocational high school, as well as vocational classes in several other high schools, to educate and to care for the needs of these students. The program, with some modifications, has

continued to this day. One such group is known as trades and services students, all of whom experience difficulty in reading and academic learning (Jampolsky, 1972; Mack, 1969; and Melnyck, 1979). The majority of these students are reading two grades below their grade placement, a level identifying them as problem readers (Ransom, 1978; Stauffer, Abrams & Pikulski, 1978). These young adolescents, even though they may be of normal intelligence (Schloegl, 1973), have experienced difficulty in developing competent reading strategies within reading programs that have proven effective for most students. The inability to read required material affects learning in all school areas: arithmetic, social studies, English, and science (Kirk, et al., 1978), and overall academic work is severely threatened. The further a student progresses in school, the more success depends upon the ability to read. Since most trades and services students have reading levels below grade placement, they may hold erroneous perceptions of the experience of reading, its purpose, and of the reading strategies employed during the reading process.

This study then, focused on failing students, first alluded to in 1964 by W. P. Wagner, who continue to populate the school system. The major concern was the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading. The trades and services program of the Edmonton Public School system provides academic upgrading and vocational training, and holds the subjects of this research.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading. If problem readers hold erroneous perceptions of reading, becoming aware of these perceptions may assist educators to make predictions about reading abilities and consequently develop appropriate reading instruction to alleviate the problems. Further, becoming aware of erroneous perceptions of reading, may hold implications for reading in the trades and services classes of the Edmonton Public School.

This study examined how the adolescent problem reader approached reading by determining what strategies (Fagan, 1983; Malicky, 1983) s/he used for reading and what his/her perception of reading was.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What strategies does the adolescent problem reader use in his/her approach to reading?

2. What is the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading?

These research questions will be answered by means of a qualitative analysis of data obtained from an interview study with young adolescent problem readers.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Adolescents: are students ranging in age from 13 to 19 years.

Perception: is the thinking process which reacts with meaning to a stimulus and response whereby a central process intervenes to organize the incoming data into some sort of pattern. And the "meaning" of one's perceptions is usually based on one's past experience and/or his/her organizational characteristics (Dechant, 1964, p. 494-95).

Problem Reader: for this study, is one who is reading two levels below the present grade placement (Ransom, 1978; Stauffer, Abrams & Pikulski, 1978).

Reading: "is viewed as communication between reader and author, with comprehension the goal of all reading encounters....And reading has not occurred unless the reader arrives at [the author's] meaning." (Malicky, 1983, p.8)

Reading Strategies: Since reading involves an interaction between print and the reader's knowledge, the reader must develop strategies to deal with the graphic input in reconstructing the author's meaning. Therefore the reading strategies referred to are the processes involved in the reading act itself--"how" the adolescent attempts to arrive at meaning from print. More specifically: attending/intending, analyzing, associating, synthesizing, inferring/predicting and

monitoring all acting in harmony and are known as interactive reading processes (Fagan, 1983; Malicky, 1983).

Trades and Services Students: are those students who have been identified as having problems coping with a regular academic curriculum, are weak in at least two areas, usually reading and mathematics, and have frequently repeated two school grades. Trades and services students are channeled to the vocational pattern of the high school (Current literature, ... High School, E. P. S.)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. By assessing the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading, erroneous perceptions may be identified.

2. By becoming aware of the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading, instructional procedures may alleviate false impressions held. Changing the approach to reading might bring about a positive attitude toward reading.

3. By becoming aware of the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading strategies, s/he may be assisted in becoming proficient in reading. These adolescents might themselves become proficient readers by understanding and employing interactive reading processes.

4. By becoming aware of the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading, administrators may be better able to motivate

and to facilitate developmental reading instruction. The information gained, and if utilized in practice, might positively influence school policy for reading instruction and thus enable the school to achieve educational objectives.

5. By becoming aware of the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading, and modifying instruction to correct erroneous perceptions, students might be assisted to develop a desire for reading, to participate actively by reading, and thus to lead a fuller life.

Information gained, and if utilized in practice might positively influence reading.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A number of limitations characterize this study.

1. This study was limited by the ability of the subjects to put thoughts into words and express their perceptions orally.

2. This study was limited by the small number of participants selected to participate which restricts the generalizability of the findings in the study to wider populations.

3. This study took place over a short period of time and the data collected were limited to the student's responses and discussion of questions.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER I presented a brief overview of the nature and purpose of the present study. The remainder of the study is organized in the following manner:

CHAPTER II reviews the related research and literature which has dealt with problem readers and provides a theoretical framework for the present qualitative study. It outlines various methods of research in diagnosing problem readers. This chapter also reviews the related research depicting the interactive reading processes.

CHAPTER III describes the design of the study and the data collection procedures including the method for establishing rapport with the subjects.

CHAPTER IV outlines the qualitative analysis of the data collected and is devoted to describing the findings of the study based on the discussions resulting from the individual interviews.

CHAPTER V completes the study. The entire investigation is summarized with conclusions and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with literature pertinent to the study. The first part reviews the theoretical background, the interactive reading processes theory, and the interactive reading processes. The second part, related literature, discusses reading strategies, and perceptions of reading. The third part provides a rationale for the research.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

Chall (1967) evaluated all available reading methods from 1910 to 1965 and as a result recommended a code emphasis only as a beginning reading method, but, warned against practice without attention to meaning. Four methods of teaching reading were commonly accepted: the "phonic" method, learning letter-sound correspondences; the "sight" method, learning whole words; the "sentence" method, learning words in meaningful context; and the "linguistic" method, learning correspondences between spelling patterns and oral word patterns. Publishers of reading materials started including linguists

as authors or consultants for their programs. The reading profession turned to linguists and psycholinguists seeking answers to problems of reading instruction (Popp, 1975).

Soon the pedagogy of sequencing materials from simple to complex was questioned. A psycholinguistic approach to reading was advocated in the 1970's, with a strong emphasis placed on learners utilizing their existing language. Smith (1971, 1975) contended that for the fluent mature reader, comprehension may precede word identification rather than follow it, a top-down process. Laberge and Samuels (1980) and Gough (1985) suggested that the reader is considered an analytic processor of print whereby printed information is analyzed through a series of low-level to higher-level stages, bottom-up processing. Smith views the reduction of letter, word, or meaning uncertainty as independent of each other; that word analysis is not necessary; and that the reader should establish visual-semantic relationships, or print-to-meaning associations. Goodman (1980) viewed the reader as a problem-solver, one who uses his conceptual and linguistic knowledge to form hypotheses about what he reads, and by analyzing print, confirms, adjusts or rejects these hypotheses.

Page & Pinnell (1979) described reading as a cyclical psycholinguistic process with meaning always the goal. They described three information systems for reading: 1) The grapho-phonemic system involves taking cues from print and relating them to prior knowledge of the sound patterns of language. With this system, relationships of

words, syllables, letter combinations, and letters to sounds are used as needed to reconstruct the author's message. 2) The syntactic system, the grammar of a language, is the pattern for putting words together in phrases, clauses, and sentences and is a part of the reader's knowledge. 3) The semantic system, the language meaning, is contextually determined, and is highly social and personal representing the full range of thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the users of the language, as individuals, and as social groups. The reader seeks to reconstruct a contextually-based meaning from the author's printed language.

Interactive Reading Processes Theory

Reading takes place in a variety of settings and for different purposes e.g. social studies, science, English as well as in vocational classes to inform or to entertain the reader at school, at home or on the job. Since reading has not occurred unless the reader arrives at the author's meaning, reading is viewed as a mental communication between reader and author (Fagan, 1983; Malicky, 1983; Wixson and Bosky, 1984). Comprehension is internal and cannot be observed directly, it is a process, not a state, and it involves the meaningful reconstruction of an author's message by the use of prior knowledge. Thus successful reading emerges as a highly complex, interactive process, and what the reader brings to the page is as important as what is written (Page & Pinnell, 1979; Adams et al., 1980).

The reader makes efficient use of strategies as well as semantic clues to understand printed information. Comprehension may result from bottom-up or top-down processing. Bottom-up processing is data-driven, while top-down processing is conceptually driven. In bottom-up processing the reader may start with letters, then go to the words these letters spell. As words are identified the reader has further expectations for how these words will be strung together into phrases and sentences, and what they will mean when assembled. In top-down processing the reader comes with his/her knowledge of language, and of the world, which is tested, accepted or rejected against what is printed. For the skilled reader top-down and bottom-up processing are seen to occur simultaneously. This makes successful reading as dependent upon the information that is in the reader's head, as it is upon the information that is in the text (Adams et al., 1980; Smith, 1971, 1975; and Goodman, 1980).

Interactive Processes

Reading comprehension essentially becomes an interaction between graphic input and a reader's knowledge with comprehension the goal, graphically depicted as follows:

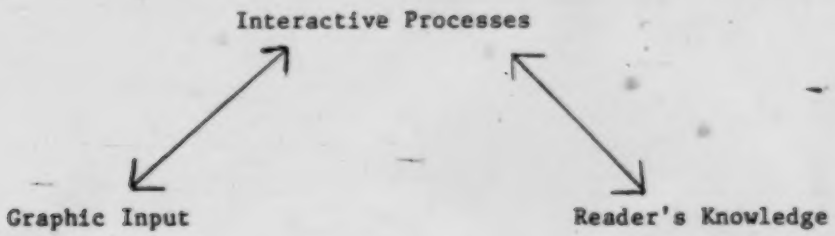

Fig. 2-1: Dimensions of a Reading Processes Model (Malicky, 1983, p.10).

Graphic input consists of the actual print, the letters and words making the sentences in text, their location on the page, as well as text organizers, headings, paragraphs and other significant features. The reader interacts with the graphic input as s/he brings prior knowledge to the text. Reader's knowledge refers to all stored experiences the reader has had, and may be considered the raw material of thinking (Fagan, 1983). The reader uses a personal store of concepts and schemata to make sense of story events. The information is analyzed and compared with information accumulated as a result of prior experiences (Adams et al., 1980; Sawyer, 1980; Rumelhart, 1980; Smith, 1982; Fagan, 1983). The reader's knowledge of the world is combined with his/her knowledge of language including structure, lexicon, syntax and semantics. The interactive processes are those reading strategies which work together with graphic input and reader's knowledge as the reader constructs meaning from print, and are described as: attending/intending, analyzing, associating, synthesizing, inferring/predicting, and monitoring. When controlled

by the reader, the strategies work together automatically in abstracting meaning from print. These strategies can be summarized as follows:

> Attending/Intending is focusing attention on the visual information and intending to reconstruct meaning from print.
>
> Analyzing is the discrimination and selection of visual information and abstracting meaning units from the text.
>
> Associating is the association of meaning with visual information in reconstructing meaning from print.
>
> Synthesizing is the synthesis of information and relationships abstracted from ideas within and across sentences as the reader constructs meaning from the discourse.
>
> Inferring/Predicting is the reader's use of background knowledge to infer or predict relationships among ideas which are not explicitly stated and thus go beyond the author's stated ideas.
>
> Monitoring is a confirming process having a broad regulative function over all of the processes involved in the construction of meaning from print. (Malicky, 1983, p.16-19).

Reading then is an active process in which meaning is constructed as a result of an interaction between the information suggested by the text and the reader's existing knowledge (Spiro, 1980).

> The reader must ... react to the author's message. The mature, effective reader must weigh the writers' words, evaluate them, appreciate them, enjoy them, and test them against personal knowledge and experience. Immature readers may accept whatever they see in print without questioning, and without reference to what they already know about the subject (Brown, 1982, p.9).

RELATED LITERATURE

Reading Strategies

Reading is grounded in experience, and the phenomena stored in one's mind have great impact on how the printed word is processed and understood. The efficient reader makes use of all the strategies to understand printed information in reconstructing the author's meaning (Goodman, 1970; Smith, 1973). There is no possible sequencing of these strategies during reading instruction since all systems must be used interdependently in the reading process, even in the first attempts at learning to read (Goodman, 1982). In the utilization of these strategies which enable the reader to reconstruct the author's meaning, Adams (1980) explains that:

> For the skilled reader, the [strategies] involved in reading are so well learned and integrated that written information can flow almost automatically from sensation to meaning. ... processing ... occur[s] at all levels of analysis simultaneously as she or he proceeds through the text. ... [And] true reading is only possible if the whole complex of subprocesses are functioning easily and in proper coordination. None of the processes can be absent or require undue attention, or comprehension will suffer (pp. 12-14).

In attending/intending the reader has to appreciate the crucial discrimination necessary for reading, as well as for what has to be ignored. An active, attentive, and selective reader who applies prior knowledge to text is required for meaningful comprehension. Also, if too much attention is given to the decoding of new words then attending to comprehension will be impeded (Ekwall, 1985).

Associating sounds to letters, auditory with visual features, involves phonological recoding but not necessarily meaning. It is the association of meaning with visual cues, without sound, that is ultimately desired. If the words are familiar, and previously present in the child's speaking vocabulary, then the student can construct a spoken analogue of the text (Smith, 1978; Page & Pinell, 1979).

Analyzing requires the reader to employ text organization, the ability to read in units larger than single words, to obtain meanings of those words in long term semantic memory, and to understand relationships held between words. Information is analyzed only to the depth necessary to meet current needs. Good comprehenders read in large units, utilizing information between and within words to enable them to minimize frequent fixation pauses and word-by-word decoding (Golinkoff, 1975-1976).

Synthesizing by integrating information across sentences is also essential to comprehension. Relationships other than sequence, are common in written discourse: cause-effect relationships, explanations, elaborations, examples, exceptions, contradictions, generalizations, and conclusions. What is in the written message is also affected by what is in the reader's head (Adams et al., 1980).

Reading involves the synthesis of information by the condensation and reorganization of words, phrases, sentences, and interpretations of the printed text while constantly monitoring for meaning and comprehension. In reading comprehension, two kinds of

processing are involved: data driven, the textual input; and, conceptual driven, the reader's knowledge structures or schemata on understanding the text. The reader's expectations and/or goals at the time of reading determine the process. Most books are written in a way that one part more or less automatically prepares the reader for the next part, and only assimilation is required by the reader. The text must parallel the reader's knowledge structure so that s/he has some control over comprehension, enabling comprehension monitoring. Understanding can be facilitated by material previously read or still to be read. As new insight is learned, the older information takes on a different importance as knowledge is constantly revised and changed

Inferring/predicting is crucial to comprehension in that it involves the interaction of prior knowledge with print. Inferencing involves using background knowledge to read between and beyond the lines and can be supported but not proven. Predictions are made and evaluated before, during and after reading. Thus, the constructive aspect of reading involves the synthesis of ideas, making predictions and inferring other ideas by bringing background knowledge to print, demonstrating that what the reader knows is valuable and can be built upon (Malicky, 1983).

Poor readers have trouble with inferential questions either because they have not had background experiences they can relate to the story, or because they have not practiced inferential thinking in their reading classes. Inferential research was conducted by Hansen

and Hubbard (1984), with grade 4 subjects. In an experimental teaching program, teachers taught their students an inferential thinking method, gave them a lot of practice, and had the students talk about their process of drawing inferences. Student's comprehension and interest increased when they talked about how they read, drew inferences, and answered inferential questions, and as these poor readers read, they compared, extended, interpreted and actively created messages. From the discussions, students understood that meaning of a text does not lie within the words on the page. The students compared something from their own lives to something that might happen in the upcoming story. Teachers led students through the inferencing process so they would realize what thinking processes they might use as they read. Students read the stories immediately after the strategy discussion. The results of the study indicated that students, with inferential instructions, read post-test stories with significantly greater success than did the other students.

Monitoring comprehension is the ability to recognize that a failure has occurred, to make a corrective decision, and to regulate one's level of understanding while reading. As predictions are made, they are tested with cues from the text against the reader's background knowledge, then confirmed or refuted. Further text information is sampled to revise predictions. Monitoring is thus seen as having a broad regulative function over all of the strategies involved in cummunicating with the author in the reconstruction of meaning from print (Malicky, 1983).

> The effective reader engages in a variety of deliberate tactics to ensure efficiency. ... The efficient reader learns to evaluate strategy selection not only in terms of final outcome but in terms of the pay off value of the attempt; information is analyzed only to the depth necessary to meet current needs. This ability implicates a subtle monitoring of the task demands, the reader's own capacities and limitations, and the interaction between the two. All these activities involve ... conscious, deliberate attempts to understand and orchestrate one's own efforts at being strategic (Brown, 1980, p. 456).

Alverman (1983), in a study with average grade two children, implemented a technique of protocol analysis which requires the subject to think aloud as s/he solves a problem. The subjects were required to "think aloud" after reading each clause which was marked with a red dot. With this technique the researcher was able to infer the reading strategies used.

In a similar protocol analyis, as described above, Olshavsky (1977) assessed the strategies of grade ten students. Twenty-four tenth grade students were randomly selected from three heterogeneous high school English classes to investigate the reading processes they employed in comprehending an author's message. The results demonstrated an important difference between the reading behavior of good and poor readers. Although both groups used the same reading strategies, readers with high interest applied strategies more frequently than readers with low interest, and the good readers used all reading strategies more often. The greater use of strategies by good readers implies they are more active in their attempt to comprehend. In a later study, again with protocol analysis,

Olshavsky (1978) investigated eleventh grade student's ability to adjust their strategies to accommodate increasingly difficult material. Good and poor readers read the same excerpts from four short stories (levels 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, and 13-15 according to the Dale Chall readability formula). The findings revealed that good and poor readers use all strategies less frequently as the stories become more difficult. Olshavsky concluded that there was evidence supporting the teaching of problem identification and problem solving strategies, and that if strategies are essential, teaching readers to apply them would be one means of helping them to cope with the difficult material they encounter in the high school.

Divesta, Hayward & Orlando (1979), working with junior and senior high school and college students, investigated comprehension monitoring in terms of where information is located in the text: running text, the text in the order in which it is written, or, subsequent text. A cloze test was devised to measure differences in the reader's use of running and subsequent text and the extent to which words available in the text are used to complete the context of a passage. Twelve unrelated paragraphs, with five words deleted from within each paragraph, predominantly nouns and verbs, made up the test. The position of the deleted words was varied in two ways: in six of the paragraphs, the deletions were in the first half of the paragraph; in six of the paragraphs, the deletions were in the last half of each paragraph. Running text paragraphs required only

assimilation through serial reading to find information for the cloze test, while subsequent text paragraphs required the reader to refer to the last half of the paragraph in order to gain the information needed to complete the cloze test.

The researchers found that the ability to use subsequent text was a learned strategy which was related to reading maturity, and/or age, and developed with reading experience. Comprehension improved when the use of subsequent text was developed, and with increases in ability, the reader was aware that information is located within the text rather than just at the point of fixation. The fluent reader had developed this desirable expectation, but the readers of lower ability did not employ this strategy or, if they did, they used it inefficiently. Poor readers were hindered when subsequent information was required for monitoring their comprehension, and may have viewed the text as the only source of information--information that needed only to be assimilated and understood by reading sequentially. They had not learned that text can be comprehended, even when serial continuity is disrupted, by a systematic search for contextual information. The researchers cautioned against instruction which unduly emphasizes serial processing, it may impede developing the expectation that information occurs in subsequent text.

> Overall, [problem] readers may have a limited knowledge of the role they, as processors of information, play in comprehending text. ... In part, this requires the reader's understanding of what the text can or should provide balanced against what the reader must provide or do to the text. It involves further an understanding that one, as reader, need not rely exclusively on the precise order of words as printed to understand the text and that, on occasion, the reader may find it necessary to sample other portions of the text as dictated by his or her needs (Markman in DiVesta, Hayward & Orlando (1979), p.105).

How children read to remember involves both reading to understand and efforts to retain what is read. Students who monitor their comprehension and apply remedial strategies to problem solving are better able to exert control when comprehension fails. Conversely, readers who fail to detect a reading problem will not correct a failure to comprehend. In an investigation with sixth- and seventh-grade children, Hare and Smith (1982) set out to determine if what children say they do is what they actually do in classroom reading situations. The first purpose was to determine whether good- and poor-reading sixth-graders differed in their monitoring and memory strategies; the second purpose, with seventh-graders, was to determine whether reading achievement and recall scores would be positively related to the number of strategies produced. Working with these groups of parochial school children, protocol analysis as well as retrospection and self-report was used. Students had no trouble reporting the reading processes they thought they employed in monitoring and problem-solving strategies. Good readers appeared to

use more effective reading processes and stopped reporting when they had exhausted what they believed they knew. As well, students' retrospections about what they did correlated moderately with reading achievement.

Perceptions of Reading

Reading is a mental process, a communication through print with the author. Reading activities take place in a variety of settings and for different purposes; the student's perception of these activities is important to our picture of his/her approach to reading and comprehension. Thus, the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading is examined to determine how his/her reading strategies and perceptions of reading come together. Fagan (1983) explained that in studying the act of reading:

> ... the focus is on what the learner is doing while reading rather than on what the teacher teaches and what the reader may have learned. More specifically, ... one is concerned with how a reader identifies words and constructs meaning. Reading is viewed as an integrated activity in which the reader's prior knowledge aids the interpretation of print, and the interpretation of print influences the nature of prior knowledge that is brought to bear in constructing the author's message (pp. 11-12).

Perception is receptive in the sense that it involves the taking in of sensations. A central process intervenes between the stimulus and the response matching past experiences with the sensations, and organizes the incoming data into some sort of pattern.

The meaning of perception is usually based on the perceiver's previous experiences (Dechant, 1964; Stauffer, Abrams & Pikulski, 1978).

> Perception is the thinking process which gives meaning to a sensation or stimulus; it is the knitting together of nerve impulses into a conscious impression of the external world. It is the understanding of that which is seen or heard or felt. Every perception is a complicated weaving together of the stimuli of past experiences, of interests and even desires (Blankenship in Stauffer, Abrams & Pikulski, 1978, p. 185).

Two groups of children who were of widely different ages and abilities, grade two and grade six, were interviewed by Myers and Paris (1978) as to their perception of the characteristics of good readers and how they would resolve comprehension failure in their reading. Second graders reported fewer strategies than the sixth graders. Young children, (poor readers), perceived the purpose of reading as decoding, while older children, (good readers), perceived the goal as meaning extraction or construction. Young children tended to refer to external sources, (i.e., other people), to solve reading problems while older children generated strategies internally. Second graders perceived reading as an orthographic-verbal translation problem rather than a meaning construction and comprehension task. They seemed to be unaware of the characteristics of good readers and the special strategies required for monitoring understanding. The results of the study demonstrated that poor readers have a limited understanding of the purpose of reading and reading strategies and could profit from instruction in the parameters of proficient reading.

Hare & Pulliam (1980) employed an introspection/restrospection technique to find out what college undergraduates think they do when they read. These adults were asked to introspect about how they were reading while reading an article, after which they wrote down everything they had noticed about their reading. The students were able to report how they believed they read and from an ability grouping standpoint, definite differences between good and poor reader's perception existed regarding both number and types of processes utilized to comprehend material.

Palmer, Slater, and Graves (1980) replicated the Meyer et al. (1978) study, with grade nine students. The effect of passage difficulty and the extent to which good and poor readers used the author's schema in recalling information were examined. The findings agreed with Meyer et al. (1978) indicating:

> ... that good readers use the author's schema while poor readers don't; students who use the author's schema recall much more than those who don't; and simplifying the vocabulary and syntax of a passage does not necessarily change those outcomes (p.41).

In a similar study, Paris and Myers (1981) with fourth-grade, good and poor readers, examined student's perceived strategies utilized in comprehension monitoring. They found that poor readers may adopt decoding rather than meaning comprehension goals, and are less accurate in applying monitoring strategies in resolving comprehension failure.

A study by Gambrell and Heathington (1981) was designed to extend the knowledge base concerning adult disabled readers. Adult disabled readers, reading at or below the fifth grade level (determined by an informal reading inventory), were compared with adult good readers, college juniors. Subjects were questioned as to their perceptions of reading. The results of the study demonstrated that adult poor readers had a limited understanding of the purpose for reading, held misconceptions about reading, and did not know how or when to use specific reading strategies for monitoring comprehension failure. They reported that it was easier to read word-for-word than to read for meaning; that it was more efficient to read out loud than to read silently. The adult disabled readers' knowledge of strategy variables was much more like the second graders than the sixth graders described in the Myers and Paris (1978) study. They appeared to perceive reading as a decoding process rather than as a meaning construction or comprehension task. The results of the Gambrell study demonstrated that adult disabled readers have a limited understanding of what reading is, and could profit from instruction regarding the purpose and strategy dimensions of proficient reading.

If a student's perception of his/her reading ability is that of an able reader, more reading processes will be applied and s/he will know when s/he has exhausted what s/he knows. A problem reader, on the other hand, will use fewer reading processes and will be unaware of when his/her knowledge has been exhausted. Alverman &

Ratekin (1982) studied the perceived proficiency of seventh and eighth grade readers and their actual performance. A questionnaire ascertained students' perceptions of their reading ability. Average grade 7 and 8 students retrospectively reported on the reading strategies they employed in reading a folk tale. Students accurately predicted their level of proficiency in reading and studying for an essay test. It was found that the readers' perceptions of proficiency influenced their choice of reading processes applied, as well as their level of performance on different tasks. Subjects who perceived themselves as having low proficiency reported reading carefully or slowly more often than the self-perceived high proficiency students. The results of this study suggested that 7th- and 8th-grade average readers may have only a limited awareness of the range of strategies available, or, that these students may have demonstrated only those strategies they have found useful from past reading instruction.

Wixson et al. (1984) designed the Reading Comprehension Interview for use at the intermediate and middle school level (grades 3 to 8) for gathering information about students' perceptions of everyday classroom reading activities. It was piloted extensively with grades 3, 4 and 5 from a variety of settings: regular classes, remedial classes, learning disabilities classes, and university clinics. The findings showed that students held misconceptions about the purposes for reading in basal text.

1. Their perception of the goal and purpose for reading was flawless decoding, saying all the words correctly.

2. In content reading the goal was understanding and remembering information.

3. Poor readers showed a lack of awareness of the need to employ flexible strategies for different comprehension activities and different reading materials, and may have a limited knowledge of the role they, as processors of information, play in comprehending text.

5. Strategies needed for classroom comprehension were not developed. Several students were unaware that the answers to inferential questions are not explicit in the text.

This body of research has established that strategies play a significant role in text processing and may make a substantial difference in the quality of meaning constructed by the reader when reading text. It is the inability to orchestrate strategies, and their ineffective use which is the primary distinction between good and poor readers. Comprehension failure among poor readers is due to lack of awareness that failure has occurred, and to the inability to self-regulate, monitor or check the effectiveness of strategies used (Aulls, 1981). In the classroom, sound, informal diagnostic observations are among the first steps to wholesome instruction.

Most of the above research has been with students in regular schools. Researchers have often viewed lower-grade, or younger readers as "poor" readers, and the higher-grade, or older readers, as

"good" readers. Some research identified good/poor reading ability by standardized tests, teacher identification, or school achievement. In this present research, the students who participated were from trades and services classes who had been identified as problem readers. The focus of this investigation is the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading and the strategies s/he employs.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In today's society it is essential to learn to read and to read well, since reading is one of the most important skills; it affects virtually every aspect of our lives. Failure to learn to read places severe social and business restrictions upon the individual. An individual cannot fully participate in a modern society unless he can read, and by this is meant reading at a rather high level of literacy. The options available to the poor reader are much more limited than those available to one who can read well, at the twelfth-grade level of difficulty or higher (Carroll & Chall, 1975; Bailey, 1975; Haring & Bateman, 1977; Brown, 1982). Further, if adults do not achieve reading competence, failing to practice, reading skills could diminish over time (Abhari, 1978).

> Written material continually surrounds us, and a person who cannot read is seriously handicapped. A severe reading deficiency affects the personal adjustment and accomplishments of a person to a far greater extent than do many other handicaps. The large numbers of deficient readers among school drop-outs, juvenile delinquents, prison inmates, and people on welfare are evidence of this. In fact, one

> of the most pressing social problems of our literate and technological civilization is finding employment for people who cannot read or who have only limited reading ability (Pollack & Piekarz, 1963, p. vii).

Learning to read is considered a lifetime process, therefore, the secondary student needs instruction in reading so that s/he can meet the increasingly more complex demands of the school as well as the tasks which society has imposed. Subject-matter instructors in high schools and colleges have a responsibility for helping students continue their growth in reading (Dechant, 1971).

> With the rapidity of change in today's world, old jobs become obsolete and there is need for continual retraining for new tasks. It is predicted that all individuals in every occupational area will have to retrain themselves to prepare for new jobs many times during their work careers. Reading is the key tool for retraining and maintaining employable skills. Automation has resulted in the elimination of many jobs that were filled by unskilled or semiskilled workers. ... Such workers ... become chronically unemployable if they do not possess the minimum reading skills required for success in other positions. The level of reading competency required for many occupations is surprisingly high (Sticht et al. in Kirk et al., 1978, p. 15).

By pinpointing the strategies that fluent readers use for dealing with difficulties in understanding, and by comparing these strategies with the strategies poor readers use, it should become clear as to what strategies poor readers must learn (Collins et al., 1980). This research may therefore assist in curriculum development for the problem reader.

SUMMARY

This chapter described reading and the interactive reading processes. Other salient studies relevant to the present research have been presented. The reader brings a variety of strategies to text to obtain meaning, and it is the reader's actual and/or perceived ability, background of knowledge, and purpose or goal which facilitates comprehension. The extent to which these abilities are employed in extracting the author's message is less for the poor reader; the good reader is aware of when s/he has knowingly exhausted his/her resources.

Chapter III follows with a discussion of research design and procedures employed in the study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

This chapter is concerned with the design of the study which is based on a qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with adolescent problem readers. The research data consisted primarily of recorded individual interviews. The responses to interview items provided the data which focuses on the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading and reading strategies.

A description of the school and its students, the sample, the selection procedures, the characteristics of the subjects, the pertinent instruments, the interview questions, as well as the data analysis is presented in this chapter.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS STUDENTS

School

The Edmonton Public School system, in an effort to serve the needs of young people who were experiencing repeated failures, who had poor academic skills and who were reading below grade placement, organized a special vocational program, now known as The Trades and Services program, whereby failing students become a part of the senior high school.

The senior high school in this study was approached because it is a trades and services school where it is known that many students have reading problems. This high school, intended to serve only academically slow students is, therefore, considered to be a segregated educational setting. It is a vocational high school in the Edmonton Public School system designed for students who have had difficulty with the three "R's". In a speech to the Conference of the Canadian College of Teachers, (July 1969), the first principal described The ... High School as "a second chance school where students with past failures can start again with new hope." It is an alternative in public education for adolescents who are unwilling or unable to meet the demands of the regular high school curriculum. The school continues to uphold the original philosophy, operating with few major modifications. In its selection of students, the school follows criteria described in The Trades and Services Program, 1979-80, which states:

> The Trades and Services program is intended to accommodate students who are vocationally oriented and who experience limited success in the core subjects in their present program. Such students would have had the opportunity to spend one year in grade nine (School literature, Appendix A, p. 2).

Students are enrolled at four levels, year 01 (first year), grades 10, 11 and 12. Year 01 is an exploratory year. Students experience six different vocational areas, each for six to seven weeks. At the conclusion of this exploratory year a two-year vocational program is selected by the student, started in grade 10,

and for most students completed in grade eleven. Grade 12 provides these adolescents with an extra year for extending their chosen vocation or for exploring new fields. The school day is divided into two parts. One-half of each day is based on vocational training while the other half of the day is devoted to academic development and upgrading. The Alberta Education curriculum is adhered to, including the high school credit system. By fulfilling the guidelines, as prescribed by Alberta Education, these students in addition to a vocation, may earn a high school diploma.

Although the school is a vocational high school comprised of a segregated population, from all outward appearances it is quite like any other school in the system. There are many extra-curricular activities: an active athletic program, drama performances, and a student organization which initiates many social activities. Students in general, have a positive school spirit and are proud of their school.

Students

The student population consists of adolescents ranging in age from fifteen to twenty years. The majority have come from segregated modified classes in the junior high school. Trades and services students are identified as those who would have difficulty coping with the requirements of the conventional high school and as having problems with academics, especially reading and mathematics, even

though they may have normal ability. Jampolsky (1972), in his study, found that recorded IQ rates for these students did not fit the criterion of slow learners, instead they were within the normal range of ability. Schloegl (1973) concurred with these findings. Nevertheless, students are slow at grasping abstractions but able to respond to concrete situations.

More than half the incoming student population is reading at least two levels below their normal grade level. Reading levels in one class can range from grade two to nine (Melnyck, 1979). Rather than fail at reading, many students have found it easier to learn how to fake the act of reading or find ways to get the teacher to view him/her as a discipline problem. As frustration increases, it becomes impossible for the adolescent to view school and reading as anything else but a ticket to failure. Many, on entry to the school, have poor study and work habits, little self-confidence, poor attendance, a high record of failure, show little respect for teachers or school, and display anti-social behavior (Jampolsky, 1972; Mack, 1969; Melnyck, 1979; Schloegl, 1973).

The researcher worked with the language arts department, its department head, teachers and students, drawing students only from the language arts classes. The researcher also shared the common staff room and talked informally with other teachers in the school.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The sample for this study was drawn from the above-described segregated vocational high school. All subjects were trades and services students, whose vocational areas were automotives, business education, beauty culture, commercial foods, health-care services, building maintenance, metals, and plumbing. First year students had only recently made their vocational selections for the following three years. One first year student was interested in taxidermy, a subject not available at the school. These students were looking forward, with anticipation, to their chosen vocation. Grades 10, 11 and 12 students had pursued their vocation for one, two or three school years respectively. Grades 10 and 11 students expressed satisfaction with their vocational pursuit, while Grade 12 students were well directed and were making plans for post-high school vocational training or for future employment.

After permission had been granted by the Edmonton Public School system to conduct research in the school, the administration and language arts teachers were approached. The project was explained to them. The researcher identified subjects from school records. Subsequently, subjects were approached by their teachers who invited them to participate. The adolescents were given a free choice to take part or not to take part in the study. No student refused to participate; thus, the sample was considered voluntary. Subjects were informed that the researcher was a student as they were, and therefore, the interview was not to be an academic exercise.

Selection of qualifying subjects was slightly restricted due to particular circumstances at the time in the senior high school. These conditions were: absenteeism (a number of students were on work experience and away from school), extra-curricular sports, and community activities. Also, because vocational departments have tight time-tables and would have been greatly inconvenienced by releasing students, it was determined that students should come from their language arts classes. The only exception was when one girl was taken from her typing class.

All subjects were happy to be students at the vocational school and were confident in their progress. Subjects willingly particpated in a discussion on reading and exhibited no apprehensions. The interviews were informal, the subjects were relaxed, confident and spoke freely. Students generally appeared to be comfortable in discussing their vocation.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

Information for the selection of students was obtained from the cumulative records and from records in the reading centre. Selection of subjects concentrated on establishing which pupils, from a trades and services senior high school, met the following criteria:

1. the subject's cumulative school records were available;
2. the subject's intelligence quotient was within the average range of 85 to 115;

3. the subject's chronological age placed him/her in the adolescent teen years, 13 to 19 years;
4. the subject's reading level was approximately two levels or more below grade placement; and
5. the subject's first language was English.

School Records

At the time of the research, all students of the sample were attending a segregated high school. The population in this study had attended classes in the Edmonton Public School system for at least three preceding school years, a requirement necessary to assure that the subjects' cumulative school records were available. The majority had been channeled into modified classes in the junior high schools and therefore, had similar instructional backgrounds. From there the students flowed into the trades and services program of the senior high schools. All subjects' cumulative school records, covering at least three years in the system, were thus available.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

IQ data were obtained for each subject from the school's cumulative records. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised (WISC-R) had previously been administered individually by the system and was recorded. Because the WISC-R is individually administered, the score was considered more reliable than if it had

been obtained by the group testing methods of other IQ tests, and thus accepted as a suitable measure for this research. Only those students for whom a WISC-R score was available and who fell within the range from 90 to 112 were selected. The sample was thus representative since the majority of the school's population falls within the normal range. Jampolsky (1972) and Schloegl (1973) in their research with this segregated vocational school found that the population generally fell within the normal IQ range.

> The pupils' recorded IQ test results [as] indicated [from] the ... records of two groups, those attending the school for the first time (Year I students) and those who were students in the school already in their final year (Year III students) were reviewed. ... Considering only children whose IQ scores fall above the lower limit of the normal range (IQ 90), the number is 280. The proportion of pupils whose IQ had been established as 89 or less is 144 children. The ratio then, of students of normal learning ability to those who are intellectually handicapped ... is about two to one respectively (Schloegl, 1973, pp.2-3).

By choosing the normal range the very high and very low ability students were eliminated from the study.

Chronological Age and Sex

Sixteen adolescent subjects participated in this study. Of this group seven were female and nine were male, ranging in age from 15 to 19 years.

Reading Level

The subjects in this study were reading at approximately two grades or more below their present grade placement, a level considered by some authors as indicative of a problem reader (Ransom, 1978; Stauffer, Abrams & Pikulski, 1978).

First, subjects were identified as problem readers by reason of their placement in a trades and services school. Most of the candidates were enrolled in differentiated language arts and/or mathematics classes in the junior high schools and had a history of below average performance in core subjects. Thus, students who met the following criterion for selection to the trades and services program were deemed to have reading problems.

> The trades and services program is designed for students desiring general education and vocational preparation beyond the junior high school level and who require remediation prior to embarking upon senior high school programs. Because of their history of poor academic performance, such students are unlikely to be successful in a "regular" high school program (Criterion for Selection, Appendix A, p. 3).

Second, the reading level, as determined by Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP), administered and recorded by the school, and summarized in Table 3-1, further identified the problem reader.

TABLE 3-1

READING LEVELS OF THE SCHOOL POPULATION ON THE STEP

Spring	Test Form	Grade	Number of Students	Highest Rdg. Level	Lowest Rdg. Level	Average Rdg. Level
1982	I-Y	01*	264	12.9	5.9	8.0
1983	I-Y	01	222	12.9	5.9	7.4
1984	I-Y	01	245	12.9	5.9	7.3
1982	I-X	10	219	12.9	6.9	8.5
1983	I-X	10	200	12.9	6.2	8.5
1984	I-X	10	200	12.9	6.9	8.4
1985	I-X	10	144	12.9	6.9	8.6
1982	J-X	11	125	12.9	6.9	9.2
1983	J-X	11	145	12.9	6.9	9.4
1984	J-X	11	138	12.9	6.9	9.1
1985	J-X	11	123	12.9	6.0	9.2
1982	J-Y	12	77	12.9	7.0	10.1
1983	J-Y	12	73	12.9	7.9	9.5

*Represents the first year of the program or the ninth school year.

Reading levels for the school are broad in each classroom, ranging from grade two to nine and in a few cases even higher (Melnyck 1979). These young people, having average ability, may have fallen behind academically because of poor attendance due to poor health, or because they are part of a highly mobile population whose families have caused them to miss a great deal of school instruction. Some students are from that segment of the school-age population who are multiple handicapped; I.E. have impaired vision, or are deaf, or have poor hearing, or have a speech impediment, or have physical and/or medical impairment, but are integrated in the school. Yet another

group was transferred to the school because no other alternatives were available. These students, now performing at a lower level than their peers, help to make up the population at the trades and services high school.

Even though trades and services programs are designed for students having academic problems there are some exceptions. Some students may have been placed in the program for reasons other than academic or reading problems and may in fact not be problem readers. They may have been channeled to the trades and services program for discipline reasons, while some may be there for societal reasons. These students may not in reality fit the selection criteria (Appendix A). Because the focus of this study was on problem readers, students reading less than two years below grade placement were generally eliminated. Low reading scores for some of the population may not be reliable in view of the student's background or history, and oral communication may have posed a problem. Thus, in order to have a representative sample of problem readers from the school's population, efforts were made to exclude, from the research study, the very high readers as well as the very low readers.

Subjects' Language

All subjects reported that English was their mother tongue. Therefore, the spoken language was not considered an issue for this research.

Summary

Table 3-2 summarizes information on each subject in the study including sex, age, grade placement, IQ, reading scores, and vocational goal.

TABLE 3-2

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENTS IN THE SAMPLE

Student*	Sex	Age	Grade	WISC-R	STEP	Vocation
Daryl	M	15	01**	101	6.4	Taxidermy
Tory	M	15	01	90	7.5	Metals
Kerry	M	16	01	91	5.9	Automotives
Darren	M	16	01	95	7.2	Automotives
Avril	F	16	01	112	7.4	Business Ed.
Wanda	F	16	01	90	5.9	Com. Foods
Andy	M	17	10	106	7.2	Automotives
Hilda	F	17	10	105	8.4	Beauty Cult.
Yoland	F	17	10	95	8.8	Beauty Cult.
Claire	F	17	10	91	8.8	Beauty Cult.
Ronald	M	18	11	96	9.3	Plumbing
Evan	M	18	11	95	9.3	Maintenance
John	M	18	11	94	6.4	Com. Foods
Shelly	F	18	12	109	7.7	Health Serv.
Candy	F	18	12	94	7.9	Business E
Rolf	M	19	12	95	7.9	Automotives

*Fictitious names.

** Represents the first year of the program or the ninth school year.

INSTRUMENTS

The instruments for this study were both formal and informal. Two formal tests had been earlier administered by the system, the results were recorded in the cumulative records and in the reading center. These results were made available to the researcher. Informal interview questions (Appendix B) were prepared and conducted by the researcher.

Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP)

Reading tests measuring a student's ability to comprehend and interpret written materials were previously administered by the school. STEP tests do not focus on any one particular method of reading instruction but rather on the end result of the process. Buros (1978) described the STEP tests:

> ... as a broad screening device for overall reading skills, or to provide gross information for making administrative decisions in grouping or programming. ... [it is] technically one of the best gross measures of reading available. (No.744, p.1219 and p.1220)"

Two levels of STEP standardized achievement tests, each with two forms, "x" and "y", are administered by the school in the spring to grades 09, 10, 11 and 12. The on-level testing is carried out by selecting and administering the test level that was designed for that particular grade. Table 3-3, describes the target grades and norms for the tests administered by the school. STEP grade scores, therefore, were considered adequate to identify students for the sample.

TABLE 3-3

SUBJECT GRADES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STEP ADMINISTERED

Grade	Level	Form	Target grades and norms for on-level testing
01*	I	x	spring grade 7 through fall grade 10
10	I	y	spring grade 7 through fall grade 10
11	J	x	spring grade 10 through fall grade 12
12	J	y	spring grade 10 through fall grade 12

*Represents the first year of the program or the ninth year in school. (STEP manual, p.11).

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised (WISC-R)

The WISC-R was also administered and recorded by the school system. Because the WISC-R has a reasonably high correlation with reading achievement (Stauffer, Abrams and Pikulski, 1978), the scores were used to identify the population in the normal range.

Interview Questions

The major purpose of the study was to determine the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading. Because of the characteristics of the research population, it was considered that subjects would be more willing to talk than write about their reading ability, therefore, an informal, private, interview procedure was followed. Guiding questions (Appendix B), prepared by the researcher, became the main instrument for the collection of relevant data. Students responded freely to questions. Digressions were not discouraged as they were seen as valuable contributions to the

research. Fourteen questions (Appendix B) were developed to engage subjects in a discussion.

Interview question 1 focussed on the student's vocation. This seemed to put the subjects at ease. It was a topic about which s/he felt knowledgeable and which s/he was willing to discuss. Thus, the vocation was also referred to in subsequent questions.

Interview questions 2 to 7 quizzed the problem reader as to the strategies employed in his/her approach to reading, and answered research question one. The interview questions sought responses with regard to the interactive reading processes: attending/intending, analyzing, associating, synthesizing, inferring/predicting, and monitoring, as described by Fagan (1983) and Malicky (1983).

Interview questions 8 to 14 searched for the student's perception of reading, thus, providing answers for research question two. In addition, all other responses relevant to the the subject's perception of reading were included.

Validity and Reliability of the Interview

The effectiveness of the interview depended on the extent to which the researcher established rapport with the subjects prior to the interview. To do this, the researcher made herself visible, every day, by informally talking with students in the hallway. Teachers also assisted by introducing the researcher to their whole class.

Throughout her stay at the school, the researcher was accepted as a friend and greeted by many students. Consequently, when the interview did occur students were quite relaxed and did not regard the researcher as a stranger.

Interview questions were carefully designed to assure validity and to ensure that the significant information was elicited. In order to obtain consistency of responses and reliability several questions were restated in a slightly different form and at a later time in the interview (Gorden, 1975; Best, 1981).

PILOT STUDY

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted in order to determine whether adolescent problem readers could understand and if they would respond to the interview questions. Two male students were selected by their teachers to participate in the pilot study.

TABLE 3-4

PILOT SUBJECTS

Age	Grade	STEP	Vocation
15	01	9.1	Small Motors
18	12	10.9	Plumbing

The interviews were conducted in a private work room, were tape-recorded and transcribed later for analysis. Students participated voluntarily, were relaxed and talked freely. A variety

of responses was evident indicating that the subjects had little difficulty answering the interview questions. As a result, the researcher determined that trades and services students were able to take part in an interview and respond to the interview questions, and that the questions and procedure were appropriate for the study.

From the pilot procedure it was determined that one class time was adequate for the 30-minute interview session.

DATA COLLECTION

The interview method, with guiding questions, (Appendix B) was used to obtain relevant research data. Each interview was conducted privately in a small, quiet work room containing a supply of English books which students were able to handle and refer to if, and when, they wished to do so. Few did so. Interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes and were tape recorded.

Prior to commencing the interview, students were informed as to the nature and purpose of the study, and were given assurances that this was not an academic exercise. Rapport was established with each student by discussing his/her vocational area and the school in general. Students seemed relaxed as they spoke with the researcher. The interviewer began each interview by saying:

> I am going to ask you questions about your reading. If you don't understand what I am asking, then you ask me to clarify it. If you can't explain it one way, do it another way. If I don't understand you, I'll just keep asking until I get some kind of response. But, I am not testing you. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer. I just want to know what you think.

Much prompting was required. Digressions were seen as valuable contributions to the understanding of the adolescent problem readers' perception of reading.

The first question, based on their vocational pursuit, provided a topic about which students were knowledgeable and willing to discuss. It helped set the atmosphere for the session. Those subjects who did not engage in reading outside the classroom, or who seldom read, found reading in the vocational area meaningful, realistic, and an activity recently experienced. For them, reading in the vocational area was a valid activity.

The interview questions were read from the script in a conversational manner in the same order to all students. If a subject was unable to answer, or clearly misunderstood the question, it was repeated. If the repetition failed to elicit a response, the question was rephrased. Many probes were used. As a result, of the interviewer's oversight, some subjects were not administered all of the interview questions. The omissions were few.

Student responses to interview questions, 2 to 7, provided the information from which their reading strategies were inferred. The number of strategies inferred in the responses were counted. Each of the six questions could have contained the six interactive reading processes for a maximum of (6 x 6) thirty-six.

The remaining questions, 8 to 14, generated discussion on the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading and constructs were analyzed.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study, designed to provide insight into the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading by analyzing with a view to clarifying and categorizing qualitative information in terms of interrelated perceptions, follows a paradigm described by Bliss, Monk & Ogborn (1983).

The interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. The data obtained consisted of the participant's replies to interview questions and the related discussion. Students were sometimes allowed to digress because of the relevance of their discussions.

The descriptive analysis involved the researcher in inferring the interactive reading processes from the responses to questions 2 to 7. Two fellow graduate students read the inferred reading processes and were in complete agreement with the researcher. The discussions drawn out by questions 8 to 14, as well as relevant responses from the other questions, were classified and categorized. The constructs provided the picture of the adolescent problem reader.

SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the design of the study, the sample, the selection procedures, the characteristics of the subjects, the instruments used, and procedures followed. The interview study was conducted in private individual sessions; the questions with the

responses were tape-recorded and transcribed. Subjects were 16 adolescents, 15 to 19 years of age, 7 female and 9 male, each of whose I.Q. fell within the WISC-R normal range, who read two grades below grade placement and were registered in trades and services classes of a senior high school of the Edmonton Public Schools. The data were analyzed, organized, and classified by the researcher so that an insight into the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading might reveal pertinent information. Significant data were gathered and analyzed from the discussions with adolescent problem readers, having normal intelligence, but who were reading below grade placement.

Chapter IV follows with the qualitative analysis of the data collected and describes the findings of the study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter will present an overview of student comments, providing an insight into their perceptions of reading by examining and analyzing discussions. It will answer the questions: "What strategies does the adolescent problem reader use in his/her approach to reading?" and "What is the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading?" The analysis of the actual responses will deal with what the student thinks s/he does when reading--interpreting print. Although these questions would seem basic to understanding the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading, the review of the literature has revealed that only a small body of research has set about providing some answers.

Since each subject was learning a trade, the vocational subject matter became a focal point around which discussion emanated and from which background material was drawn. For subjects who seldom read outside the classroom, reading in their vocational area was meaningful, realistic and for most an activity recently experienced.

READING STRATEGIES

Question 1: "What strategies does the adolescent problem reader use in his/her approach to reading?"

The reading processes of attending/intending, analyzing, associating, synthesizing, inferring/predicting, and monitoring (Fagan, 1983; and Malicky, 1983) occur simultaneously and interactively as reading takes place. Student responses were analyzed according to their application of these reading strategies.

Strategies Reported by Different Subjects

Table 4-1 gives a summary of the distribution of reading strategies reported by the adolescent problem readers as they discussed how they drew meaning from print in an effort to comprehend the author's message. A broad range of strategies is revealed. Candy demonstrated the greatest number of reading strategies and Daryl the least.

Daryl, age 15, a first year student, was uncertain as to what his future educational pursuit might be. He was also undecided about his vocation for the following year, and unlike other first year students had not made his preference known in registration. He thought he might like to be a taxidermist or a gunsmith. Neither of these vocations is available at his present school.

TABLE 4-1

SUMMARY OF READING STRATEGIES REPORTED BY SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS*	Attend Intend	Analyze	Associate	Synthe-size	Infer Predict	Monitor	Totals
15 yrs.							
Daryl	6	1	1	0	1	1	10
Tory	6	2	2	4	2	2	18
16 yrs.							
Kerry	6	4	1	5	1	2	19
Darren	6	4	2	4	3	3	22
Avril	6	3	0	4	2	3	18
Wanda	6	2	2	4	2	2	18
17 yrs.							
Andy	6	2	2	4	1	3	18
Hilda	6	1	2	3	2	2	16
Yoland	6	1	2	3	1	4	17
Claire	6	1	2	3	1	2	15
18 yrs.							
Ronald	6	4	2	4	2	2	20
Evan	5	2	0	5	2	3	17
John	6	4	3	5	1	3	22
Shelly	6	1	2	4	2	2	17
Candy	6	6	2	5	4	4	27
19 yrs.							
Rolf	6	2	0	3	2	2	15
Totals	95	40	25	60	29	4	

*Fictitious names to protect student identity.

Daryl demonstrated little enthusiasm or interest for reading, explaining that he could read, and would read, if and when he felt like it, setting his conditions for reading. He would read if he had to apply for a job, or he might read a magazine on hunting. For the time being, however, he seldom read, except in school where he had little choice. For him, reading was a function of school. A transcript of Daryl's comments follows indicating how these were coded according to the reading strategies.

Researcher	Daryl
Question 2. Suppose you were going to read a whole book about taxidermy, what would you do?	
	I'd just read through the whole book. [attend/intend]
(Handing him a book) Assume that is a book about taxidermy.	
	I'd just start at the beginning.
Would you read all of it?	
	If I was going to be a taxidermist, yes. [infer/predict]
Is there anything else you would do, if you were reading?	
	I don't know. I'd have to have one in my hands. I'd probably just find out who wrote it and read it.
What else?	
	That's about it....I'd just flip through the chapters to see what chapters there are. What chapters are most interesting. [attend/intend, analyze]

Researcher	Daryl
Question 3. If you had to read an article about taxidermy and you only had a few minutes to read it, what would you do to get the main idea of the article?	
	Just skim through it....Just sort of fast read it. Read it fast. [attend/intend]
What kind of things do you look for?	
	Hmm... I don't know....The things that are of most interest to me. [attend/intend]
Question 4. Suppose you were going to retell a story that you had read, what would you try to tell?	
	The most interesting parts.
Yes. And how would you get to that?	
	Just read it to them, I guess.
No, you don't have a book.	
	Just remember the beginning and start at that....Just keep going on with the story. [intend, synthesize]

Researcher	Daryl
Question 5. When you are reading and you come to a word that you don't know, what do you do?	
	Skip it and look it up later. [attend/intend]
Where would you look it up?	
	Dictionary, or a thesaurus.
Supposing you didn't have either of those?	
	Just wait until I get one.
Question 6. In your book on taxidermy, if you came to a whole sentence you didn't quite understand, what would you do?	
	Figure it out, I guess. [attend/intend]
How? What would you do?	
	Hm. Just read it over a couple of times....Just concentrate on it a little harder and you can figure it out. [monitor]
Are there any things that you would look at more carefully when you reread it?	
	Yeah. Some of the harder words or some you don't know....I'd just say look it over once or twice and just keep on going.

Researcher	Daryl
Question 7. If you were teaching someone to read what would you do?	I'd teach them how to pronounce it out. Like, say this word, "pro", (pointing to the word "prophecy" on the cover of a book), this is "prophecy". "Pro-phe-cy", Like that (demonstrating). [attend/intend, associate]
Is there anything else you would do?	No, I don't think so.

In contrast, Candy, age 18 years, a grade twelve student was much more confident in her approach to reading. She confided that she had only recently started to read when a friend had introduced her to love stories and romance novels. She was able to identify with characters, thoroughly deriving pleasure from reading and was thus motivated to continue. Even though Candy is identified as a problem reader by reason of test results, Candy perceives herself to be a good reader. She is enthusiastic about reading and is developing reading for private pleasure. Although somewhat immature in her ability to express herself, Candy's new discovery and enthusiasm for reading is apparent.

Researcher	Candy
Question 2. Supposing you were going to read a whole book about Business Education, what parts of the book would you read first? (Holding up a book)	
	Well, usually I'd read the index first. [attend/intend]
Why?	
	Well, to find out what's in the book. What contents do I like and dislike. And the strong points that I can increase my vocation in.... And then I go find out about the author. [infer/predict]
Why would you find out about the author?	
	Well, ever since I have been little I always read to find out what kind of background they [authors] have. Why are they interested in writing this type of book? It lets me understand what the author is so I have a little memory of about him....Then just go ahead and read the book. Sometimes I take down points to find, like little tabs myself. Like, the good points that I can increase my improvements, in what I'm doing that's wrong that I can also improve. [monitor, analyze, synthesize]

Researcher	Candy
Question 3. If you had to read an article about Business Education and you had a limited amount of time to read it, what would you do to get the main idea?	
	Oh, usually you try and find the biggest headings in certain chapters. And the most important points, like every chapter has got. Trying to pick out certain part that's strongest in a certain chapter....Like, OK. Like, if you were reading about typing, a chapter about typing, you'd find out, you mostly talk about skills and accuracy, then you go under that. And then,...it varies in different, like a ...classes. [attend/intend, analyze, synthesize, infer/predict]
Supposing you were reading a book on science, would you do the same thing?	
	Yeah, I do the same in almost any kind of book....After I read the book I go back and pick out parts, you know, that are most interesting to me. [monitor]

Researcher	Candy
Question 4. Suppose you were going to retell a story to someone, a story that you had read, what would you try to tell?	
	First I'd tell them the main events....Well, tell them... this is what happened at this point.... Introduce them to the story, and then give them the brief, the main events of what's happening in the middle, and then finish it off with a conclusion. Also, introduce them to the characters and the author. [analyze, synthesize, attend/intend, infer/predict]
Is there anything else you would do to help remember that story?	
	Sometimes I'd ...well, if I like a book a lot... I will sometimes read it two, maybe three times, because I really like the book. And sometimes, when I pick out books, like I say, in the library I'll pick out books too, that interest me. And also I pick out stories, if I'm reading in class, that would interest them, so they can focus on what I am doing.

Researcher	Candy
If you reread a book, do you get the same thing out of it the second time?	
	No....Well, the first time you're, it seems like you're getting... introduced to the book. Right? And then as you go along, sometimes you understand sometimes you don't. So then when you go back you usually get a different view because your opinion is a lot bigger about this story. [monitor]
Question 5. When you are reading and you come to a word that you don't know, what do you do?	
	Usually, I a... I sound it out in my head, and then I try and figure it out.... Then I just (oral reading) say it as fast as I can.... If somebody corrects me it doesn't bother me.... I go back and say the word just like they said it. [attend/intend, associate]
Is there anything else?	
	Well, I don't skip the word because, you know, sometimes the words are too important to miss out. And if the word is too big for somebody else to understand I'll stop (oral reading) and explain what the word means in a sentence and then I'll go back and read it so that way not just me but other people can understand. [monitor]

Researcher	Candy
So you read the sentence and you get the meaning from the sentence...	
	Most times I do.
Even if you didn't know the word, the meaning comes.	
	Yeah. Just, you can usually tell the word by the sentence, by the way the structure of the sentence is. [analyze, synthesize]
Do you ever use a dictionary?	
	Oh, yes.
How does that help?	
	It helps me understand how you can separate a word, spell it in different, like there is all these different ways you can spell the word, different meanings, and punctuation and stuff like that.
Question 6. When you are reading and you come to a sentence that you don't understand, what do you do?	
	I usually go back and read over the paragraph. And let's say, if there is a page or more, I'll start over and read back so I can understand what the author is trying to say to me. [monitor, analyze, attend/intend]

Researcher	Candy
Do you ever do anything else?	Oh, not usually. That's what I mostly do, go back.... If I don't, if I'm reading it by myself I'll think about it, then try and judge by my own mind. And if I still don't understand it, I'll go back and read over the paragraph. And like I said, the sentence structure brings out the sentence a lot better. [infer/predict, synthisize]
Question 7. If you were teaching somebody to read, how would you do it, what would you tell them to do?	Well, I...Oh, boy, that's a hard one...um... It depends on what kind of reading level a person is in. Like, some people can't read, some people are, like, either they can read but they don't understand what they are reading, or some people understand all the time and they just throw it in the corner. [analyze]

Researcher	Candy
Say, if it was a little niece... about six years old who wanted to read, what would you teach that person?	
	Well, usually at six years old, OK, when they start school they try and introduce them to the alphabet. And then start off with little learning books like, you know with three letter words like "cat" and "dog". And then when you are showing them you show the word plus a picture so that when they see that picture they'll know how to spell [it]. They'll learn to spell that word and they'll know what this word means. [associate, attend/intend]

Strategies Reported for Different Tasks

The subjects generally reported use of strategies in accordance with the task at hand. Strategies reported depended on whether interview questions involved reading for comprehension, recalling the text, solving a reading problem, or teaching reading. Table 4-2 illustrates the strategies subjects reported according to the reading task involved.

TABLE 4-2

READING TASKS AND STRATEGIES

Question Numbers	Attend Intend	Analyze	Associate	Synthesize	Infer Predict	Monitor
2 & 3	16	9	0	24	20	8
4	16	5	0	14	5	0
5 & 6	16	19	14	16	7	20
7	15	6	12	1	0	1
Totals	63	39	26	55	32	29

*Research Questions (Appendix B) (#2 & 3 = comprehension; #4 = recall; #5 & 6 = problem solving; and #7 = reading method).

Reading Comprehension. Responses to interview questions 2 and 3 indicated that many reading strategies were applied when students were interested in and understood what was being read whether the subject matter was vocational, academic or fictional. Discussions dealt with the students' chosen vocations and therefore, were related to shop settings in which students read materials based on their vocational experience and personal interest. What a subject brought to the book was considered to be as important as what was written, and influenced his/her ability to extend information not explicitly stated in the text. Tory indicated that he assessed information according to how it related to what he already knew.

Researcher	Tory
Suppose you were going to read a whole book on woodworking (handing him a book), what would you do first?	Well, I'd first look at the contents and see what it's all about... And then I'd just start paging through it and reading up on things that interest me.
What would you read as you are paging through the book?	Things about how to put wood together, like different joints and types of nails and screws.
What are you doing when you are paging through?	Well, I'm just sort of scanning the paragraphs and finding pointers on how to do different things.
If you had to read an article about woodworking and you had a very short time, what would you do?	Well, I'd see if I could, like if there is some kind of a, listing at the front of what categories there are in the book...I'd just turn to that category that I want, or that is the most interesting and start reading that first, and then go back to the other ones....I'm imagining. I'm putting a picture in my mind, actually picturing what's happening.

Interest fired the desire and intention to read. Reading was more likely to occur if printed material dealt with topics of interest to teenagers. Interest and reading went hand in hand and as soon as interest lagged, reading ceased. When asked how he would decide on what to read in his vocation, Kerry stressed the importance of interest, and of attending to the reading task, explaining:

> I would look in the contents [of a book] and see what I'm basically interested in. Probably in the motor itself, and then [I'd] probably go to that chapter and start reading in there. I wouldn't lose interest quick[ly]....[If a reader] has a long attention span and really can concentrate long in the certain area...read quickly and understand what he is reading, [then, s/he is a good reader].

Ronald agreed:

> I would look through the index and find and look up what...really interested [me].

Subjects appeared to read only if the topic was within their realm of interest. Wanda, displaying enthusiasm and interest for her vocation, synthesized information from throughout the passage.

> I'd read different paragraphs. Not all in the order the way paragraphs go from paragraph to paragraph...just a couple of sentences to get what it means in the paragraph and what it is trying to explain....And...if it looked real interesting and had something to do with foods, if you're real interested in foods, you'd end up reading the whole thing.

On the other hand some students read only when there was no other alternative. Shelly, who preferred physical activity to sedentary reading, found it difficult to attend to reading. How Shelly felt about reading and how she approached reading follows:

> I can't read more than five pages or I'll fall asleep....I would find the pictures first and just browse through the pictures...to get an idea of what the book's going to be about....If I found it interesting I would read it, if not, it would be put away....I get bored with it. I'm not interested in reading....Sometimes I'll just browse through the last part of it, if I'm not finished,...'cause that's where everything sort of falls apart and everything stops in the story....If I didn't get it, well, at least I tried.

In response to question 3, the main idea was referred to by each student as that elusive something most students vaguely discussed but had difficulty describing.

Recalling Text. In recalling text only a few reading strategies were reported. Very few subjects described how they would retell a story; most were unsure of a procedure to follow. Few indicated that they analyzed the information. Some reported that they recalled the events in order of importance and/or sequence but made no interpretations, while others thought they should remember every word indicating a complete absence of understanding how to proceed.

Tory selected information across a story assimilating events into what he hoped would become a meaningful whole, saying:

> I'd recall the most important moments and then I'd start from the beginning and I'd just think what I read there and just piece it together almost like a puzzle, and it'll come out more or less of a story.

Wanda on the other hand, proceeded to retell the story:

> Like THE THREE BEARS and GOLDILOCKS. [I'd] tell them about this little girl, just like you.... She's walking through the forest.... [She] comes to this house, the Three Bears' [house] that live there.... I know what's going to happen next and next through the whole story and it just sticks in my head. I just carry it to them.... When I tell it, I get into it. It just sticks right in my head.

Academic or fictional reading was viewed as being different from vocational reading. Subjects did not equate the procedure of recalling events from a story with remembering what was read from a manual in the vocational shop. Reading from a trades manual could be directly related to concrete, hands-on material, and therefore, was meaningful.

Solving Reading Problems. The ability to monitor one's reading, detect comprehension failure, and initiate appropriate reading strategies for remedial procedures, is often considered to mark the difference between independent and dependent readers. Even though the degree to which subjects indicated that they monitored reading varied, when reading problems occurred, most subjects reported a similar pattern: skip it, ask someone, look in the dictionary/thesaurus, or solve the problem independently by "figuring it out". Shelly, when asked if she could figure out words by herself, replied:

> I don't know what I would do. I think I would just leave it out. If I don't do it right or whatever then that's a mistake I've made but I can't really figure things out like that.

Hilda avoided the problem completely by saying, "I'd find another book." Shelly and Hilda were uncertain as to how to solve a reading problem. Most subjects lacked the confidence to proceed independently but when encouraged to do so were successful. Kerry illustrated initial lack of confidence followed by relative success.

Researcher	Kerry
When you are reading and you come to a word you don't know, what would you do?	
	I'd probably, I probably would pass over it. I'd probably just leave it and skip over it.... Probably just go on.
Would you ever be able to figure it out?	
	Well, like, I'd try to sound it out. And I'd try to get it. But, if after a little while I couldn't, I'd just probably go on. 'Cause I'd just get frustrated at myself.
Would one word spoil the meaning?	
	Well, it depends, how big a word, like, what kind of word it was in the story.... Like, if it didn't make sense, then it would have to be an important word and I'd have to find it out.... You could go to somebody and ask them. Go to the teacher, Mom, anybody.

Researcher	Kerry
When you are reading and you come to a whole sentence you don't understand, what would you do?	I would just probably look it over and if I really didn't understand it and couldn't figure it out, I'd probably just go to the teacher and say, "I really don't understand the sentence", and ask him for some help.
Supposing the teacher isn't there, and these are instructions on how to repair the car you are working on.	Well then, I'd probably go to another student and ask them for help.
No other student there, you're alone.	Well, then I'd just have to figure it out by myself.
What are the things you could do to figure it out?	I could read underneath that. Read below the sentence.... Figure it out.... You just read on, and it'll make sense then... You have to do that.... And then that just falls into place, so it must be right.

Although students recognized the need to analyze visual information, exactly how important parts were identified was unclear. For many subjects the practice of associating sound and symbol to decode an unknown word seemed to be a solution. These students were bottom-up processors of print. Tory provided an example:

Researcher	Tory
When you are reading woodworking and you come to a word that you don't know, what would you do?	
	I'd try and sound it out the way it was spelled. You don't know with this English, some words they don't sound like they're spelled.
Then what would you do?	
	Well, if I couldn't find out what it meant, I'd go to Mom and Dad or teacher.
If there is nobody around?	
	Well, then I would read the rest of the sentence and sort of figure out what that word means.
How?	
	For instance, [if] I wouldn't know what "spoken" means, I'd just, like for instance, [if] spoken was in a sentence like... "I have spoken lots of things to you. Now, would you repeat it to me?" or something like that. And it sorta means "speak" or something like that.

However, not all subjects considered the association strategy useful, and at least one student admitted to its failure. These adolescents were approaching reading from a top-down process and may have found graphophonics a hindrance in synthesizing information. Claire's inability to sound out words left her feeling inadequate in reading even though she was using other strategies successfully. This attitude is a reflection of a belief in what constitutes the appropriate reading teaching method. Frustrated, she explaind:

> In grade one, I learned how to sight read so I can't sound out the words very well. You're supposed to be able to. It helps you read.

The association of sound and symbol assisted some subjects in decoding words, but did not necessarily provide meaningful reading. Pronouncing a word only helped if the word was already a part of the reader's vocabulary. Students made reference to the dictionary in determining word meanings, but few found it useful, reporting that teachers have said, "If you don't know what a word means, look in the dictionary." Rolf reported how he solved a reading problem in context, without a dictionary.

> I usually get two words that I don't know, or I might think I don't [know]. I'll take it out of the sentence. I'll keep on reading. Then I'll go back and stop there and I'll think about it. If that sentence says a person was crucified, or something, and if I didn't know what crucified meant, I'd keep on going until there is a word that identifies the word that I just missed.... sometimes it helps, and sometimes it doesn't.... If not, I read it about four or five times, and if not... I go to a dictionary.... It [dictionary] tells me the meaning of it, but it doesn't show me enough definition of it. Not always.... There are some times where it [dictionary] just doesn't [help] and you need help.

Teaching Reading. The importance placed on association of sound and symbol and of analysing discourse again became evident as subjects described how they would teach reading. Students usually suggested teaching reading by a graphophonic method even though they had described other reading strategies. This agrees with the findings of Meyer & Paris (1979). Subjects perceived reading to be a series of hierarchical skills with association of sound and symbol as the starting point for bottom-up processing. Hilda described her method of teaching reading as follows:

> I'd teach them the alphabet.... Then, I'd teach them how to put the letters together to make a word. Make them sound it out. Read it back over and over until they knew the word by looking at it.... Then I'd get them to put words together in sentences so that it would make sense to them. Then they'd start reading paragraphs, [and] books.

Kerry went on to describe the importance of understanding what is read, stating:

> Oh, well, I'd just tell them to take one paragraph at a time... and just try to look at every word. And do it very, very quickly, and precisely.... Because you have to.... Because if you just take... one word at a time, you know, be really slow about it, you'll forget the meaning. So I would just tell them to do it quick[ly] and take every word, you know, just do it that way.

Most subjects felt that practice was essential to developing good reading, but only a few referred to meaningful reading, comprehension of print by mentally communicating with the author. Avril, in teaching someone to read was not only concerned with practice, but with meaningful reading, especially understanding questions in school.

Researcher	Avril
If you had a friend who just came from Europe and he couldn't read English, and you are going to teach him how to read English, what would you do?	
	To try and read as much as they can, but if they can't figure out some words to come up and I'd help them to a certain extent.
When your friend is going to read, what is he trying to do?	
	Well, for one thing, the meaning of a story, or work.
When you say "work", what do you mean?	
	Like, they could be questions, and it's trying, understanding... questions.... And if he doesn't understand them well he can't do them.

Discussion

Even though books were available for students to handle and refer to, few subjects did so. References were made to the table of contents, summary and glossary, but other organizers such as headings and bold print were not. Subjects tended to report strategies for reading at a literal level, depending on concrete hands-on association with the text. This may be immediately due to the nature of vocational reading which is to read-and-do, limiting or even restricting personal interpretation. Still, subjects in the study

were aware of most reading strategies, and reported use of different reading strategies for different reading tasks.

Of concern was the finding, that few subjects reported they solved reading problems independently. Most students leaned heavily on assistance from the teacher, parent or peer, and only when pressed to do so would they turn to their own resources. Even though reading below grade level, a few subjects were in the process of developing independence in reading. It was these readers who employed more strategies in mentally communicating with the author, and possibly processing larger units of print (top-down processing) consequently, making meaningful interpretations, identifying with characters, and experiencing pleasure from reading. These readers, were attempting to solve reading problems independently by using the dictionary, glossary or thesaurus. Those who found these materials useful were assisted with pronunciation, spelling and word meanings.

Dependent readers, on the other hand, tended to view the reading processes as a series of hierarchical skills to be mechanically applied as they processed small units of print (bottom-up processing). Dependent readers grappled with word and sentence recognition, and were frequently overwhelmed by big words. These problem readers perceived that the ability to "sound out a word" was the solution to solving a reading problem. However, since word meaning is dependent upon the word being within the student's vocabulary, comprehension did not necessarily follow decoding. Most

dependent readers were unable to effectively use the dictionary. Thus, if graphophonics failed them, they asked for help from anyone nearby.

In summary, when reading for comprehension from problem-free material, subjects reported that they applied several reading strategies. When recalling information or retelling a story, a systematic approach was not practiced. Subjects did not understand their role as processors of print and that understanding along with meaningful interpretation was necessary for recall. When solving a reading problem, adolescent problem readers indicated that they resorted to graphophonic solutions. Finally, when teaching someone to read, again, a series of hierarchical strategies and association of sound and symbol were described. Perhaps this is indicative of how they think they themselves were taught to read.

DEFINITION OF READING

Question #2: "What is the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading?"

Reading is an interpretive process of abstracting meaning from print in a mental dialogue with the author. The definition of reading held by the adolescent problem reader (Table 4-3) is a determining factor as to how, when and if s/he reads. Definitions involved the dichotomy between decoding and comprehension and between oral and silent reading as well as an indication of the function of reading,

e.g. for school, vocation or pleasure. Subjects may hold more than one definition of reading or all of them depending on the individual's reading development, attitude toward reading and purpose for reading.

TABLE 4-3

SUBJECT'S DEFINITIONS OF READING

	No. of Subjects
Decoding	12
Comprehension	4
Oral Reading	6
Silent Reading	10
School	13
Vocational	16
Pleasure	14

Decoding vs. Comprehension

Decoding skills are used by good readers in a meaningful way as text is organized in a bottom-up and top-down manner. Poor readers often overstress decoding in reading rather than extracting information from a page. Whether reading to comprehend, solving a reading problem or teaching someone how to read, decoding words was the first definition described by the problem readers in this study. This decoding focus may be the result of experiences in school where traditionally the mechanics of reading have been emphasized. These students may be decoding text word by word and are bottom-up processors of print. Good readers, Andy said:

> ... just can look at the words and know what they are right away, not having to look at every letter,... just recognize it.

Others described the process of reading as learning the alphabet and combining its sounds and symbols to form words and viewed reading as a series of hierarchical skills. Darren said:

> It [reading] is the pronunciation of letters put together to form a word.

Wanda added:

> It depends on how much they read. Their spelling is good.... Anybody that's good in spelling could sound out words better and know what words are like. It's easier for them.

In addition to decoding, Hilda, Kerry and Avril explained that comprehending the author's message was crucial to reading. Hilda described reading as:

> ...looking at words and understanding what they're meaning, knowing what the word is and recognizing it.

Kerry explained:

> If you don't understand what you're reading I think it's, like you're not reading, because it's no point.

Of her reading, Avril stated, "I get a lot out of it....You have to understand." Yoland explained the difficulty she experienced in understanding print:

> I'm not a good reader and I'm not a poor reader.... I'm more closer to a poor reader.... I don't get everything I read. I'd have to read it over a couple of times.... sometimes, depending on what it is. If it's a long story then I have to go back and read and find out whose who again.

Candy, not only explained the importance of practice and comprehension to reading, but also described some of the advantages to be derived from reading.

> He [a reader] knows what he is reading. He can understand the words and knows what he likes to read, and if he likes to read something,...[and] if he finds a series of books that he likes to read, the more he reads the better his reading is going to increase and the better his spelling skills will become.... When I'm reading something, I can understand what I am reading.

Oral vs. Silent Reading

Reading was perceived by the adolescent problem reader as being both oral and silent, inside and outside the school environment. Smooth, error-free oral reading with good expression was discussed by many problem readers without consideration for grade level or ability difference. Evan thought a good reader was:

> Someone who can read clear and somebody that can feel the different moods. You know, fast or slow.... If something is sad, they read it kind of sad. And if something is really exciting they'll read it quick[ly].

Daryl said, good readers:

> ...can read without stopping, do everything mixed, all quotations, and stops [punctuation marks] and whatever... [and] usually if a person can write really good, and spell words good, he can usually read just as good.

Oral reading was seen as a device for assessing reading ability by teachers, parents, siblings, and peers. Rightly or wrongly, oral reading in the school has historically been used by teachers as one measure for assessing the reading ability of students.

It [oral reading] provides the teacher with a window through which to identify reading strategies employed. It is one criterion by which students are labeled and grouped as readers. As well, students evaluate their own reading success against the oral performance of their peers. Wanda, comparing herself with others both in and out of school, described her reading ability as follows:

> I don't think I'm bad. I think I'm OK compared to other people that I've heard. I've heard people that are better than me and people that are worse. I've had practice in school and at home. I've helped my mom with baking. I'd read the recipes out to her.

Oral reading may be for entertainment, for reading to an audience, or for reading character parts in a play, but for some students, oral reading is viewed as necessary for comprehension. Students whose reading is at an early level of development may find it difficult to understand without hearing the text. Shelly and Yoland depended on oral reading in order to comprehend and solve reading problems. Shelly explained oral reading in this manner:

> I don't know. It's just when you read out loud you feel that you can basically hear yourself and understand it. When you are reading alone sometimes you always have to repeat little things.

Yoland solved problems in her mathematics class by reading orally, as follows:

> I'd read it carefully and make sure I understood... by reading it over, or, reading out loud. I find that helps sometimes... with Math... when they have sentences that I don't understand. Like, solving problems when you have a sentence... When you hear it out loud... you can hear your mistakes where you can't really see them.

A small number of subjects considered oral reading a hindrance to meaningful reading. Candy explained:

> ...to yourself you can...think about what you are doing, what you're reading, and you can form your own judgement.... When you are reading out loud you've got to think how that sounds so your parents or your classmates...understand what you read. And... say you are reading something that is suspenseful you've got to put some suspense in it, spiff up the story so that they understand. So, you've got to think about both sides.

While Tory said:

> I can read a lot quicker when I'm reading silently than I can out loud.... I find it a little harder to read the words [orally]. In my mind the words just seem to pop in but when I'm reading them out loud it takes me a few more seconds to, to almost spit it out, as you could say.... Silently they just seem to come in.

Ronald agreed with Tory, saying:

> When I read to myself I can read things better than [when] I read out loud.... I go through a story fast.... Well, you get right into the story when you read to yourself.

Subjects described the good reader as one who when reading before an audience, could pronounce all the words, observe and respond to the punctuation marks, read smoothly without stumbling or making mistakes, and read with appropriate expression so that not only the reader, but the listener, could understand. In addition, the good reader was able to spell well and thus was good at sounding out words; was able to write well; was able to concentrate on a subject for a long period of time; was able to read fast and comprehend; and was able to remember and retell details and events. Finally, all students

agreed that a good reader was a prolific reader. Most subjects fell short of this mark. The descriptions, of oral and silent reading, reflected an ambivalence in the subjects' perceptions of reading. In the final analysis, oral reading became the deciding factor for assessing the quality of reading by comparing personal reading with that of another. In self-evaluation, subjects considered themselves to be good at silent reading, but poor at oral reading. Subjects, as a result of the experience in school, placed too much importance on oral reading. When asked if he was a good reader, Ronald replied:

> To myself I am, but compared to others, no.... When I read to myself I can read things better than [if] I read out loud. I go through a story fast.

John, who was self-conscious about his reading, attributed his "poor" reading to an imagined speech defect. When asked if he was a good reader, John replied:

> Not really. [I] usually stutter too much. I get stuck on words. The easy words [orally].... I read all the time [silently] if I like a book. If I have one, I read it.... I've a speech impediment and I get the words all mixed up. I say them backwards, stuttering.

Kerry, who also judged himself to be a poor reader because of his oral reading performance said:

> I don't think I'm a good reader... because... I stumble on a lot of words.... When I say a big word it sort of floors me.... I probably know them but just the length of them... so I just skip it.

Erroneously, some subjects placed greater importance on the reading mode than on the reading process of communicating with the author by abstracting meaning from print. However, self-evaluation of reading ability was positive, particularly on silent reading.

Functions of Reading

Reading is for school. It is in the classroom environment that students build their theory of reading, delineating what reading is and what reading is for (Page and Pinnell, 1979). Subjects defined reading as a school activity, for answering questions, for tests and assignments, for satisfying requirements of the teacher and the school, and necessary for entry to the vocational shops. Reading, in the vocational high school, was thought to take place in language arts classrooms, specifically in the English class where reading ability was assessed by teacher and peers. Reading was perceived to be compulsory even though most students were voluntary; that is, they were of school leaving age. Reading, as a function of school, was deemed to be an imposed activity and accepted as a necessary hurdle for access to the vocational shops. Because of their lower level of academic achievement, upgrading is considered necessary for the school's population. Therefore, it is not only a requirement of the school, but a requirement of the Department of Education that students attend academic classes for one-half of the school day. Reading is, therefore, viewed as a process under the control of others, the

outcome of adult directives, rather than being self-motivated. The feeling that reading was imposed by others was affirmed by subjects. Claire said: "I'm made to" read. While Yoland said:

> Some people read because they have to read, and they know they have to read because they are poor in reading.

Reading is for employment. In the vocational shops, trades and services students perceived reading to be for employment, for some time in the future, and something they had to do. Reading was considered functional. It was in the vocational shops that adolescents discovered that reading was personally important to them and that it was a necessary accomplishment for functioning successfully in the working world. Here confidence, interest, motivation, and awareness of purpose were seen as factors influencing reading. The vocational areas or trades were chosen voluntarily by each student and therefore, all were motivated in their field. A shift in emphasis or attitude toward reading became evident. Reading in the trades shops was viewed as quite different from reading in the language arts classes. In the shops reading-to-do and reading-to-learn was the norm. In fact, the shop was very nearly divorced from the school both physically and philosophically. The shop environment was appreciably different from the academic classroom. The physical plant had an industrial setting, including doors which opened directly outside. Shop clothing was worn,

industrial tools and equipment replaced pens, and manuals replaced textbooks. Shops assumed the atmosphere of specific trades in the working environment.

Reading materials, such as shop manuals, encountered in reading-to-do were rarely unfamiliar to students. Trades workers cope because of the highly repetitive nature of on-the-job reading tasks influencing worker interest, motivation, experience, and specialized knowledge. In each vocational shop, a specialized vocabulary existed and was found in the various shop manuals. Technical words peculiar to the occupation and everyday words holding vocational meanings were in daily use. Students were totally immersed in an industrial setting mastering and applying the technical vocabulary peculiar to their vocational field of work. Students, when making reference to their vocation, were not talking about reading, but instead, were referring to their trades, reading-to-do and reading-to-learn. Reading most frequently was for following directions. Reading-to-learn was described in conjunction with practical hands-on experiences which had direct applications to concrete settings.

Yoland, a beauty culture student, was convinced that she and other beauty culture students would understand a hairdressing article better than other students who were from another vocation. Referring to the specialized vocabulary, she explained:

> Because they [beauty culture students] would know what they're talking about and what it's all about.... You'd feel more comfortable, because, you know what you're doing. And if it was a different article you wouldn't have a clue on it.

John, a foods student confidently explained that foods students would understand an article on food better, stating:

> Because [we are] majoring in it and we understand it. And that's what we're taking up so we know what they are talking about.

While Tory spoke for the woodworking trade.

> ...woodworking students... have had experience with wood and there are a lot of expressions and words that somebody from [outside the vocation] that has never taken woods would not have a clue what it meant.

Subjects stressed the importance of their vocational background and experience, and of familiarity with the vocabulary of their trade. Each subject was confident in his/her own vocational area. Even though students were dependent readers and found it necessary to ask for help from the teacher, fellow students, or to resort to a glossary to solve a problem, reading in the shop was accepted as an non-threatening experience. Reading was necessary for solving a problem, a means to an end. The vocational materials were viewed as meaningful and reading in the shop as purposeful. When learners were actively engaged in relating new information to their personal vocational experiences they reported that they comprehended and remembered it better than if such relationships were non-existent.

Reading only for future employment, however, may detract from reading for today's personal pleasure. For example, as he read, Rolf applied his automotive experience to an article on automotives. He predicted, evaluated, accepted or rejected information. Rolf stated that:

> If there [are] any pictures or headline of the things, I'd first see what the headline or the indented part of the paper was.... It [the headline] would tell me what it would be on. Like, if the headline said, "new block heaters, putting in, and easier," I'd wonder: Is it easier the way the book does it? or Is it easier the way I do it? So, I would read it and see. Then I would try it. If not, go back to my normal way.

On the other hand, in discussing the reading of fictional materials outside the vocational setting, Rolf expressed his frustration with open-ended stories, demonstrating his inability to read between the lines and go beyond the printed word, thus reducing his personal pleasure. His desperation is sensed in the following:

> [I'm interested in] a story that really grabs you from the beginning. Gets you on a high point and you finish it.... Usually, I am trying to figure out what happened next.
>
> We read one story, THE BIRDS, they didn't finish the story. They just left it at "the birds attacked you" and that's it! That's all! They left [it] just at the middle of the story, and I'm just wondering what happened.
>
> Like, the mid-terms exams they gave us here. They had two good stories. The only thing is they just didn't finish them, and I liked them and they just stopped right there.

Because of the very literal interpretation of trades materials, subjects found reading-to-do and reading-to-learn non-threatening, meaningful experiences. The hands-on experiences associated with vocational reading created positive feelings but did not necessarily motivate or create a reading interest for leisure reading.

Reading is for Private Pleasure. Reading for private pleasure depended on the interest, the motivation, and the leisure time of the subjects. Subjects explained that they read for information, for learning, for education, for entertainment or for private pleasure, and to do so required meaningful communication with the author. Although only a few students read outside the classroom, those who did so indicated that interest was the motivating factor. Andy who described himself as a fast reader said,

> Sometimes I do [read]. Sometimes I read a book and if I really like the book I can read the book in one day instead of all days.

Ronald described his interest in reading:

> You get right into the story when you read it to yourself.... [When] you're interested in the story ... [you] block off everything else and put your mind right to the story itself.

Tory, as he savored the HARDY BOYS, added,

> I like mystery books, or something that keeps me on the edge of my chair and keeps me interested.

Several subjects read if the materials contained teenage subject matter with which they could relate and identify. Avril and Evan were attracted to S. E. Hinton's novels, books which are based on the life-like experiences of orphaned teenagers living in a down-and-out segment of society. When describing The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton, Avril said: "This one book I've read three times.... I really liked that book." Evan, who lived alone, felt akin to his fictional

friends. He had discovered companionship and pleasure in reading, explaining:

> I read quite a lot.... [I] read for enjoyment in [my] spare time. I like to read because I enjoy reading. I really enjoy reading.... I've read all those [S. E. Hinton] books.... Everyone of them.... It's enjoyment to me.... It's enjoyment to me. You can see, for instance, take The Outsiders, they had a purpose in what they were doing. I just like to go along and feel like I'm there.

Literature based on a romantic theme captivated the reading interests of Claire, Candy and Wanda. Love stories provided vicarious experiences for these adolescents. The world took on new horizons for Claire, when she discovered SWEETHEART BOOKS, romantic novels.

> [I like] something about teenagers at the level where I'm at, and things happen like happen to me. They are more realistic, [and] things like that happen to you too. So it makes more sense to me when I read.... [I'm] learning things. Going into fantasy like I do, I get right into the books.... [I] can fantisize things.... for enjoyment.

Reading, for Candy, was a relatively new experience, but now she spends most of her spare time at reading. She attributed her new-found interest to a friend and peer, who read a lot, and who introduced her to a series on romance. Candy enthusiastically related how she became motivated to reading romance:

> I never used to read those books but then she [a friend] showed me, and ever since then I've been reading these books.... The more I'm getting into them, the more I'm understanding, and the better I'm in my spelling, and reading, and everything, my speed and all that are coming.... All my spare... time is with reading.

Wanda, equally fascinated with romantic literature, described how it had captured her undivided attention:

> When I'm reading by just sitting here reading, nobody is around making any noise... I just start reading and I'm really interested in the book. I don't know, it just feels like I'm right in the happening in the book. I just feel like whenever I'm reading I'm happening with it.... Like I'm the person doing this.... It [reading] is like a friend, it keeps you company.

Only a few said that they read independently, or that they liked to read. For the most part, the adolescent problem readers in this study were not confident in their reading ability, and did not fully understand what reading entails. However, there was an indication that, even though reading below grade level, some subjects were comprehending text and experiencing enjoyment.

Discussion

Analysis revealed that subjects constructed and utilized various definitions of reading. Most students provided more than one definition.

The definition "reading is recognizing and decoding words", held by many of the problem readers, indicated that these research subjects considered reading to be a hierarchical skills process. They tended to view reading as bottom-up processing of print, decoding word by word, or analyzing small segments of the whole, limiting and even interfering with meaningful interpretation. It is important to note, however, that some subjects also commented on the meaningful nature of

reading, and that their focus on decoding might reflect what they thought they were expected to say as much as what they actually do as they read.

The majority of the research group approached reading with a positive attitude, and in their own evaluation considered themselves to be good readers, but poor oral readers.

The definition "reading is for school" was described by students as a requirement of school and for learning a trade. Reading to learn was considered compulsory, rather than something they liked to do; a means to future success rather than for today's personal pleasure. Even though subjects reported they liked reading, most did not read.

Research subjects embracing the definition "reading is for employment", having voluntarily selected their vocation, accepted reading in the vocational shop as a means to an end, the passport to a trade and eventually to employment. Their self-reports indicated that they were literal readers and did not, or were not able to infer meanings beyond the printed word. These subjects read only when required to do so for their employment and thus, embraced a limited perception of reading.

Research subjects, whose reading definition was "reading is for private pleasure", were understanding and identifying with what

they read, and appeared to be developing reading independence. They were showing evidence of enjoying reading for personal pleasure and gratification.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a descriptive analysis of the interview responses wherein the adolescent problem reader's perceptions of reading were examined.

The findings for Question #1: "What strategies does the adolescent problem reader use in his/her approach to reading?" revealed a broad range of strategies reported in accordance with the task at hand. Strategies reported depended on whether the task involved reading for comprehension, recalling text, solving a reading problem, or teaching reading. When reading for comprehension from problem free material, whether the subject matter was vocational, academic or fictional subjects reported that they applied several reading strategies. In recalling text only a few reading strategies were reported; a systematic approach was not practiced. When reading problems occurred, and even though the degree to which subjects indicated that they monitored reading varied, most adolescent problem readers resorted to a similar pattern, that of graphophonic solutions. When teaching someone to read a series of hierarchical strategies, association of sound and symbol and of analysing discourse were described. Most subjects felt that practice was essential to

developing good reading. A few subjects were in the process of developing independence in reading. It was these readers who employed more strategies in mentally communicating with the author, making meaningful interpretations, identifying with characters, and experiencing pleasure from reading.

Analysis of the findings for Question 2: "What is the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading?" revealed that the definition of reading held by the adolescent problem readers was a determining factor as to how, when and if they reads. Definitions involved the dichotomy between decoding and comprehension and betweeen oral and silent reading as well as the functions of reading, for school, vocation or pleasure. Regardless of the reading task, for most subjects decoding words was the first strategy referred to while comprehending the author's message was secondary. Subjects compared their own reading success against the oral performance of peers. A good reader was described as one who could read well orally, however, the subjects' description of oral and silent reading reflected an ambivalence in their perceptions of reading. Subjects generally described themselves as good readers, poor at oral reading but good at silent reading. Three functions of reading were referred to. 1) For school, was viewed as an externally imposed task, a requirement of school and for learning a trade. 2) For employment, was accepted as a means to an end, a trade and eventually to future employment. Here confidence, interest, motivation, and awareness of purpose were seen

as factors influencing vocational reading. 3) For pleasure, was adopted by only a few students, where reading outside the classroom depended on interest, motivation, and leisure time of the subjects. There was indication that, even though reading below grade level, some subjects were comprehending text and experiencing enjoyment from reading, and appeared to be developing reading independence, showing evidence of enjoying reading for personal pleasure.

Chapter V follows and summarizes the entire study with conclusions and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

This chapter contains a brief summary of the study, the main findings and conclusions, recommendations for further research as well as implications for teaching.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to provide an insight into the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading by examining his/her reading strategies employed and reading definitions held.

Sixteen adolescent problem readers, aged 15 to 19 years, from a trades and services program in a senior high school were selected as the sample for this study. Each subject read two levels or more below grade placement. The reading level was identified by the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress. All subjects fell within the normal intelligence range, and was determined by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised.

During an informal interview in their school, students were asked questions about how they approached reading (Appendix B). The researcher conducted all interviews which were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The resulting data were analyzed to determine what strategies problem readers employed in their approach to reading and how subjects perceived and defined reading. Interview questions were carefully designed to assure validity and to be confident that significant information was elicited. Question 1, while introducing a familiar topic for students, determined the vocation the subject was pursuing. Questions 2 to 7 were analyzed for the purpose of inferring which reading strategies subjects reported to be utilizing when reading for comprehension, for recall, for solving reading problems and for teaching reading to another person. The remaining questions, 8 to 14, provided an insight into how students perceived and defined reading.

Based upon the qualitative analysis of the data, the following conclusions appear to be justified.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions drawn from this study take into account the limitations stated previously in Chapter I, and reflect the senior high school adolescent problem reader's perception of reading. The findings answer the two questions posed in Chapter I.

Question 1: "What strategies does the adolescent problem reader use in his/her approach to reading?"

A detailed analysis of the interviews indicated that adolescent problem readers did, in fact, report strategies for reading, and when prompted subjects described a broad range of strategies in accordance with the task at hand, whether reading for comprehension, recalling text, solving a reading problem, or teaching reading. These reported strategies provided an insight into the problem readers' perception of reading.

When reading for comprehension from problem free-material, some subjects reported several reading strategies indicating that reading strategies increased when students were interested in, and understood what was being read. In shop settings where students read materials based on their vocational experience and personal interest subjects reported information not explicitly stated in the text, reading between the lines. While reading materials related to their job training, subjects described reacting to and communicating with the author by monitoring for meaning and synthesizing information for comprehension. Vocational reading, in the shop, was viewed as purposeful, meaningful and a means to future success while academic or fictional reading was viewed as something adolescent problem readers had to do, rather than something they liked to do for personal pleasure and enjoyment. A few students reported that they read only when there was no other alternative.

When recalling information or retelling a story, a systematic approach was not described and only a few reading strategies were reported. Very few subjects related how they would retell a story, most were unsure of a procedure to follow. A few indicated that they analyzed information, some recalled the events in order of importance and/or sequence, while others attempted recalling every word. Academic or fictional reading was viewed as being different from vocational reading and subjects did not equate their method of recalling story events with their method of recalling information read from a shop manual. Finally, in recalling text, subjects were uncertain as to their role as processors of print.

When solving a reading problem the ability to monitor one's reading, detect comprehension failure, and initiate appropriate reading strategies for remedial procedures is often considered to mark the difference between independent and dependent readers. The degree to which subjects indicated that they monitored reading varied, many subjects lacked the confidence to proceed independently but when encouraged to do so were successful. Even though reading below grade level, a few subjects described their process of developing independence in reading. Independent readers reported more strategies as they mentally communicated with the author, possibly processing larger units of print (top-down processing), and consequently made meaningful interpretations, identified with characters, and experienced pleasure from reading. These readers reported their

attempts to solve reading problems independently by using the dictionary, glossary or thesaurus. Those who found these external tools useful were assisted with pronunciation, spelling and word meanings. Dependent readers, when encountering problems in abstracting information from the printed word relied upon the teacher, a peer, a parent, or some other person, while some avoided the problem completely, found another source, or gave up reading. Two were uncertain as to how to solve a reading problem. The dictionary or thesaurus, a tool to which students were directed, was reported of little assistance to dependent readers; therefore, when solving a reading problem, adolescent problem readers indicated that they resorted to graphophonic solutions.

The association of sound and symbol assisted some subjects in decoding words. However, since word meaning is dependent upon the word being within the student's vocabulary, comprehension did not necessarily follow. Many of these subjects were unfamiliar with text book organizers. References were made to the table of contents, summary and glossary, but other organizers such as headings and bold print were not referred to. Subjects tended to report strategies for reading at a literal level describing the reading processes as a series of hierarchical skills to be mechanically applied as they processed small units of print (bottom-up processing). Dependent readers grappled with word and sentence recognition, and were frequently overwhelmed by big words. These problem readers perceived

that the ability to "sound out a word" was the solution to solving a reading problem. Most dependent readers were unable to use the dictionary effectively, thus if graphophonics failed them, they asked for help from anyone nearby.

The importance placed on association of sound and symbol and of analyzing discourse again became evident as subjects described how they would teach reading. Reading was described as a series of hierarchical skills as they reported decoding information, word by word, from small bits of text (bottom-up processing). This may be indicative of how subjects themselves were actually taught reading, or that they are more able to discuss reading in phonetic terms. Research studies have indicated that poor readers revert to the use of phonics. At least one subject described how the inability to sound out words left her feeling inadequate in reading even though she was using other strategies successfully, reflecting a belief that association of sound and symbol constitutes an appropriate reading teaching method.

Although most subjects agreed that practice was essential to developing good reading, and that interest in a topic promoted reading for pleasure, only a few subjects reported they engaged in reading outside the school setting.

Question 2: "What is the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading?"

The data analyses revealed the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading. Subjects shared one or more definitions of reading with a few exceptions.

The first definition of reading--reading is recognizing and decoding words--was held by all but four students. The majority looked at reading as being a series of hierarchical skills. Those who depended solely on association, graphophonics, were less likely to read for private pleasure as only four subjects saw reading for comprehension.

Subjects also showed an awareness of a variety of functions for reading. The first function of reading--reading is for school--was a view that reading is an externally imposed, compulsory task. Many problem readers regarded reading as an activity and function of school: for school work, done for someone else, and measured by oral reading. Erroneously, subjects placed greater importance on the reading mode rather than on the reading process, that of communicating with the author in abstracting meaning. Even though subjects had assessed themselves as good at silent reading, oral reading had resulted in lowering the self-confidence of the adolescents. Subjects regarded reading in the academic class as a necessary requirement for a vocational education which might result in greater achievement in the trades shops. For most, even though reading may be required on the job, reading may terminate with school.

The second function of reading--reading is vocational--was held by the majority of subjects in the study. Vocational reading is functional, reading-to-do and reading-to-learn, a means to an end, for future employment rather than for present enjoyment. In the vocational shops, the attitude toward reading was positive and accepted. Students felt successful and knew when they understood the printed material. Vocational manuals and texts are likely to be read repeatedly and in great detail and are, therefore, regarded in a different light. Concrete proof or verification of meaning and comprehension is alway close at hand.

The third function--reading is for private pleasure--was reported by all except three subjects, however, only a few indicated that they read outside of the school setting for pleasure. Most of the subjects assessed themselves as "good" readers but were uncertain as to what good reading actually entails and thus, did not read for pleasure. A few subjects who read independently said reading is for learning and keeping informed, for instructions and for entertainment, and comprehension was a requirement. For these readers, reading was viewed as a personally meaningful activity. They indicated that reading not only entailed comprehension of the author's message but a reaction to it.

In summation, this study yielded the following conclusions:

1. The adolescent problem readers in this study hold a variety of ideas regarding what reading is, and what reading is for. They also know that different strategies are appropriate for different

reading tasks. Unfortunately, they tend to focus more on decoding than on comprehension and on oral than silent reading when describing how they read.

2. Many of the adolescent problem readers in this study had not developed independence in reading. They were reliant on others to solve problems involving both word identification and comprehension, and did not read for pleasure.

3. Adolescent problem readers valued vocational reading above other reading, experiencing greater success in that area. Few reported that they engaged in reading for pleasure.

4. Adolescent problem readers viewed reading as a school activity which might well terminate coincidentally with school.

5. Even though reading below grade level, the adolescent problem readers in this study were happy and pleased with their progress and believed they were successful.

6. The adolescent problem reader is unsure of how to use a dictionary/thesaurus or the various text book organizers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study focussed on the reading strategies and the perception of reading held by adolescent problem readers. To further encourage scholarly concerns related to an understanding of the problem reader's deficits, a number of suggestions for further research are proposed:

1. The present study relies exclusively on interview techniques to assess the subjects' perceptions of what reading entails. To compliment the face to face encounter between researcher and subjects, a series of actual reading situations, both oral and silent, could be devised so that the researcher might observe exactly what adolescents do when they read in relation to what they say they do. Observations of these activities might tell more about the subjects' perceptions of reading and what they do when reading.

2. The present study was made with a segregated population from a vocational high school who were identified as problem readers. To provide a deeper knowledge and understanding of how perceptions of reading reflect reading performance and ability, students from regular high schools, other than trades and services students, who are identified as good readers, could be interviewed for the purpose of comparing their reading perceptions with the reading perceptions of the subjects in this study.

3. This researcher is concerned that reading for many adolescent problem readers might terminate coincidentally with school. A follow-up of former trades and services graduates might be conducted to determine what the state of their present reading practices are, and if, in fact, reading has ceased.

4. The present study made no attempt to determine factors which may have contributed to the adolescent's problem in reading. These factors in themselves might form the core for future research in studying reading problems. Suggested topics for such a study follow:

-home and socio-economic status of family

-single-parent or two-parent family

-reading habits of family

-student TV viewing practices

-student school absenteeism

-student orphaned, living alone, etc.

-student working and attending school, and

-student social problems, juvenile delinquency etc.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Findings indicate that most of the adolescent problem readers in the study had a positive attitude about reading and may be quite susceptible to corrective reading instructions. The following implications for the classroom are suggested:

1. Teachers should strive to help students to fully appreciate the purpose for reading, and realize that comprehension is the main goal of any reading activity. Students need to understand that reading is a mental communication with the author as s/he interprets the author's message by bringing knowledge to, and abstracting meaning from print. Students need to realize that their background knowledge is valuable for comprehension in reading by teaching students to think critically and to evaluate information as they read. Teachers should guide students to understand that the knowledge they bring to reading is constantly changing as new information from reading is evaluated, accepted and/or rejected. This can be achieved through informal

discussions, by providing opportunity for students to compare and evaluate their ideas with those of others, and by allowing students to realize the value of their suggestions. Caution must be exercised so that discussions do not appear to exhaust the topic, but instead leave some food for independent thought and interpretation. Further, not all reading requires questions and answers or written assignments, but rather could be for the sole purpose of enjoyment and pleasure.

2. Teachers need to help students solve their reading problems by providing informed training in what, how, when, and why the reading processes may be applied while at the same time avoiding the over-use of any one cue system. The teacher needs to modify classroom practices, to provide clear instructional emphasis on meaning, to teach students how to focus attention on meaning, to help students learn new strategies by teaching students on an on-going basis whenever the need arises, and by providing ample opportunity to practice. Teaching students to apply reading processes may be one means of helping them to cope with the difficult materials encountered in high school. With the gradual reduction of teacher support, students may become more confident in the development of self-monitoring skills, and may, on their own, successfully use more than one strategy for processing print. Teachers should be aware of different reading methods.

3. Students realize that one reads topics or subjects differently for specific purposes: to locate information, to do a test, or for pleasure. In addition to fictional reading there are

printed materials in science, social studies, mathematics and in the vocations for reading. Regardless of subject, students must be encouraged to predict and evaluate their predictions before, during and after their reading, so they will come to realize that what they already know may assist them in abstracting meaning from the text. Also, teachers of specialized subjects are better able to review and direct reading in their field of specialty; therefore, reading instruction by teachers in these classrooms and shops ought to be encouraged.

4. Teachers need to encourage the development of individual reading interests by having students exchange reading experiences through class or group discussions. Peer motivation, as found in the this study, was effective.

5. Teachers should assist and instruct students to use reading tools efficiently, such as the dictionary and thesaurus, as well as text book organizers.

6. Teachers may consider interviews as valuable additions to the procedures currently available for evaluating reading comprehension. The interview questions used in this study are a rich source of data regarding a reader's performance on classroom comprehension activities, and if used, information obtained from the interview might be directly applicable to developing an appropriate program for individualized reading instruction.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This study was concerned with the adolescent problem reader's perception of reading and his/her use of the reading strategies. The findings of the study and the related literature attest to the problem reader's over-emphasis of some strategies and the limited control of other strategies. Only a few considered meaning, understanding and comprehension as necessary and required components for reading to occur. Even so, all but two of the sample thought they were good readers, while at the same time, only a few subjects read outside the school setting. The ability to read and comprehend is fundamental to success in and out of school, on the job in the world of work, for pleasure, for entertainment, and for survival in the journey through life. Although one reads as a student in school, if reading is not continued after leaving school, these skills may diminish over time, or even vanish. In Canada, there are reputed to be a million illiterates, and an additional three million who are functionally illiterate.

Recalling an earlier statement in this study, Cox (1968) said that students leaving school unable to read will suffer from communication handicaps which will prevent them from realizing their potential in later life. The ability to read affects a student's success or failure in school, in the home, with friends, and in his/her future employment. It has a profound effect on the salary to be earned, the friends they will associate with, where they will live, and on their quality of life in general. Their reading ability will

influence every facet of life, how they will feel about themselves, others, and the world around them. Success and fulfillment in life, whether pursuing a trade or a profession, depends on one's ability to read. This knowledge becomes increasingly important as the twenty-first century approaches. With the world in transition into an information revolution through the use of the computer, the written word is becoming ever more important in the economic, social, and personal lives of individuals. In this, the school has a great responsibility. As well, it behooves all levels of government to expand educational facilities rather than to curtail them, since there are tremendous costs in maintaining persons who function poorly within a society.

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APPENDIX A

SELECTION CRITERIA

TRADES AND SERVICES PROGRAM

TRADES AND SERVICES PROGRAM - 1979-80

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The Trades and Services program is intended to accommodate students who are vocationally oriented and who experience limited success in the core subjects in their present program. Such students should have had the opportunity to spend one year in grade nine.

   For the 1979-80 school term this program will be offered at ... Composite, and ... Vocational High Schools.

2. Comparison of Trades and Services Programs in the Three Locations

   Academic upgrading and vocational orientation courses, and the level of performance expected of students are similar in all three locations.

   However, some differences in program and climate may be identified.

	Vocational High School	Composite High Schools
a)	Serves only Trades and Services students.	Regular high school setting serving students in a variety of programs--matriculation, technical, business and vocational. Trades and Services students are a minority.
b)	Total school enrolment approximately 1100.	Total school enrolment approximately 1500 at ... and 2000 at ...
c)	Integration into regular high school program requires transfers after Year I, Year II, or Year III.	If warranted, opportunity for integration into regular high school program after participation in the Year I, without a transfer from the school.

d)	Choice among 15 vocational areas in Year I.	Year I program at ... is predetermined. ... offers choice among 16 vocational areas in Year I.
e)	south-east location-- school bus transportation essential for most students.	... is centrally located. ... accessible by public transit to west Edmonton residents.

II. ELIGIBILITY

1. Age: a) Candidates for Year I should be at least fifteen years of age as of September 1, 1979.

2. Residence: Preference will be given to those students who reside in the city of Edmonton. As in the past years, a number of non-resident students eligible for registration in the Trades and Services program will be accommodated. Once a non-resident student has been accepted in the Trades and Services program, the Edmonton Public School Board makes a commitment to provide a continuing Trades and Services program to the student throughout the three years of the program.

3. Academic Background:

Students can qualify on the basis of (i) and/or (ii)

(i) Current placement in a Pre-Vocational program.

(ii) a) I.Q. 75-95 on recent group or individual tests. Although Bureau of Child Study assessment of applicants is not required, referral should be initiated in marginal or special cases.

and

b) A history of below average performance in core subjects. Most of these students will have been enrolled in differentiated language arts and/or mathematics.

4. Education/Vocational interests and Plans:

a) The Trades and Services program is designed for students desiring general education and vocational preparation beyond the junior high school level and who require remediation prior to embarking upon senior high school programs. Because of their history of poor academic performance, such students are unlikely to be successful in a "regular" high school program.

5. Commitment to the Trades and Services Program:

a) Each junior high school principal and counselor shall ensure that prospective students and their parents have a full understanding of the nature and implications of the Trades and Services program offered in each of the three locations.

b) All applications will be supported by the signature of parent(s) or guardian.

III. REGISTRATION

1. Students are to be identified and recommended for the Trades and Services program by the principal of the sending school. Orientation and documentation for applicants will be the responsibility of the principal of the sending school. Personnel from Trades and Services schools will assist with orientation and interpretation as required.

2. Unresolved concerns regarding the suitability of a candidate referred to the Trades and Services program shall be appealed to the Director School Operations at the time of registration.

3. For planning and orientation purposes, junior high schools have been designated as "feeder schools" to the senior high school offering the Trades and Services program for that geographical zone of the city (see pages 5 and 6).

4. The deadline date for resident student applications to Trades and Services in all centres is April 9. Each junior high school principal shall ensure that all application forms are received by the selected Trades and Services Centre by April 9.

5. Each junior high school principal shall forward to the Director School Operations, by April 12, a list of names of students who have submitted applications to a Trades and Services program.

6. Notwithstanding the geographical area in which the student resides, a student may, with parental consent, elect to request attendance at another Trades and Services centre. The student shall indicate the school of first choice at the top of the Trades and Services application.

   a) Such application forms will be forwarded by the junior high school principal to the selected Trades and Services Centre.

   b) When all applications have been received, administrators of the Trades and Services programs will meet with the Director School Operations during the week of April 23 to determine which of the "boundary crossing" requests can be accommodated.

   c) If there is insufficient room at the desired location, the student will be accommodated at the Trades and Services Centre for the zone in which the student resides.

7. Junior high school principals are requested to establish procedures designed to encourage Trades and Services applicants to continue regular attendance until the culmination of the present school year.

8. Students may apply to enrol in the Trades and Services program at times other than the spring registration. Arrangements should be made between the student's last school and the appropriate Trades and Services school. Students are most easily accommodated at the time of rotation through vocational exploration courses. Students new to the Edmonton Public School system who have attended a program comparable to the Trades and Services program in another jurisdiction should make application directly to the Trades and Services centre closest to their residence.

9. A number of applicants from outside of Edmonton may be accommodated in the Trades and Services program after May 31. Applications by non-resident students to the Trades and Services program should be sent to the Director School Operations by May 15.

NED/mtb
Feb.12/79

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what vocation are you? (Student's response is designated "X".) If a class of mixed vocational students was going to read an article about "X", who would find it easier to understand, "X" students or the other students? Why?

2. Suppose you were going to read a whole book on "X", e.g. "X" parts book, what would you read first? Then what else? Why? How would that help?

3. If you had to read an "X" article in a very short time what would you do to get the main idea?

4. Suppose you were going to retell a story that you read, to someone else, what would you try to tell them?

5. When you are reading "X" and you come to a word you don't know, what would you do? Why? Do you ever do anything else? Why? What have you been told to do? Does that work?

6. When you are reading "X" and you come to a sentence that you don't understand what would you do? Do you ever do anything else? Why? What have you been told to do? Does that help?

7. If you were teaching someone how to read, how would you do it? What would you tell them to do?

8. Is reading silently (to yourself) the same as reading orally (out loud)? Do you see any differences? What is the same and what is different? Why?

9. What makes someone a really good reader? Why? Do you know someone who is a really good reader?

10. Do you like to read? What do you like to read? Why?

11. Do you think you are a good reader? Why?

12. What could you do to become a better reader?

13. Why do people read?

14. Why do you read? What is reading? or, What is it to read?